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Ethnic Group Identity and Consciousness: An Exploratory Study of Edmonton Sikh Youth

by

Navjot K. Lamba

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Department of Sociology

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 1995

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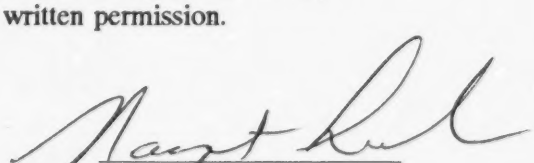

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled ETHNIC GROUP IDENTITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF EDMONTON SIKH YOUTH submitted by NAVJOT K. LAMBA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the manner by which ethnic group members perceive, express and construct their sense of ethnic identity particularly during times of ethnic strife. In an exploratory analysis of nineteen Edmonton Sikh youth, a semi-structured, open-ended interview format was designed to explore how these respondents perceive, construct, and express a personal sense of Sikh identity and how they define the boundaries which constitute the Sikh identity. To determine the impact of historical events on ethnic identity, respondents were asked if they experienced a resurgence of Sikh consciousness and a corresponding re-examination and reconstruction of Sikh identity in the period since the 1984 bombing of the community's holiest shrine - the Golden Temple complex. With respect to external socio-cultural forces, respondents were asked how they perceive the degree and nature of discrimination of Canadian citizens and the Canadian government in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises. Based on this perception, respondents were asked to comment on the impact that discrimination may have on the expression of Sikh identity. Based on the findings, various themes, patterns and insights are presented which, it is hoped, will serve to identify some important variables involved in ethnic identity construction, perception and expression, particularly, among Sikh youth. Several variables are suggested for future consideration in ethnic identity research and, more specifically, in Sikh identity studies, including the impact of ethno-religious historical events, the relationship between ethnic consciousness and various factors of ethnic identification, the role of family, and an individual's age, sex and place of residence (i.e. socio-cultural context).

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My most sincere thanks goes to those individuals who participated in this study. Their unique insights greatly shaped my appreciation of the nature of the Sikh identity. Also, I would like to acknowledge the members of my supervisory committee, Dr. Sharon M. Abu-Laban, Dr. W. Andrew Harrell, and Dr. Jean DeBernardi, for their guidance, support and genuine interest in my thesis topic. I am deeply indebted to my family and friends who believed in the value of this study and who helped me with the many obstacles I faced during the writing of this text. I depended upon their support.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE NATURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that since the 1984 Indian army attack on the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab[1], a renewed sense of identity has emerged among Sikhs worldwide. For example, in her study of the construction and reconstruction of ethnicity, Parminder Bhachu (1991a) discovered a negotiation and affirmation of the Sikh identity in British Sikhs. Bhachu argues that this cultural revival occurred as a result of the 1984 Sikh crisis. The present study is similar to Bhachu's analysis of British Sikhs in that it attempts to explore the nature of Sikh identity and consciousness among Edmonton Sikh youth and the extent to which they have been affected by the Sikh crises of the 1980's, as well as current Sikh conflicts faced by Sikhs internationally.

BACKGROUND OF THEORY AND RESEARCH

Past research and theory on ethnic groups in pluralistic societies challenged the durability and distinctiveness of ethnic groups. For example, early theories on assimilation and amalgamation stressed the idea that "some loss of ethnic identity" will occur as a result of the industrial, technological, social and political forces of the dominant society (Driedger, 1989). While these theories accepted the *transformation* of an ethnic group's identity, they denied the continuity of its

---

[1]Briefly, the Sikh massacre occurred in 1984 when the Indian government ordered their military to attack a group of Sikhs who were seeking refuge in the Golden Temple complex - the central place of worship for the Sikhs. This group was considered a threat to the government's authority as it fought for the political, economic and religious rights of Punjabi Sikhs.

distinctive character. A chief proponent of this perspective was Robert Park (1922) who asserted that once immigrants come in contact with the new society they eventually accommodate and then fuse their identities with mainstream culture. Although Park admitted that conflict and competition may occur in this assimilation process, the end result was always a fused identity.

Subsequent literature modified models of assimilation and amalgamation by acknowledging an ethnic group's ability to retain some aspects of its identity despite external forces present in a pluralistic context. Pluralism (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; Driedger, 1989) in particular, gained considerable influence. However, in all these theories, as Saram (1989a) recognizes, identities are viewed as "static entities... which [develop] or [transform] from one static state to the next in a straight line model" (Yoo, 1992: 8).

In contrast, recent theories of ethnicity have viewed ethnic identity as a dynamic, complex process. Recent studies (Okamura, 1981; Mackie & Binkerhoff, 1984; Bhachu, 1991a; Drury, 1991; Gupta, 1992; Koehn, 1991; Ganguly, 1992; Winland, 1993) have demonstrated how "identities are formulated *continuously* in a process of negotiation with a number of economic and political forces that shift over time and space" (Bhachu, 1991a:45). To appreciate this perspective, a definition of "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" is first required.

Defining Ethnicity

For an ethnic group to exist, several features must be present. First, it is argued that in all ethnic groups members must feel "a persisting sense of

groupness" (Edwards and Doucette, 1987:54) and the collective sense of a shared ancestry (Francis, 1976). These two basic requirements come about and are enforced by several objective, behavioral and attitudinal characteristics.

Objectively, it is argued that an ethnic group can be defined by shared characteristics such as language, religious or cultural symbols (Driedger, 1989; Migliore, 1988) religious ideology (Herberg, 1989), and ethnic foods and dress (Gordon, 1964).

In terms of its behavioral dimension, Driedger (1975) found at least six main behavioral features associated with an ethnic group: language use, endogamy, religious participation, friendship choices, participation in parochial schools and voluntary organizations. The immigration patterns of members in an ethnic group also shape the overall identity of the group. For example, Canadian Sikhs and British Sikhs emphasize, modify or abandon different features of the Sikh identity (Chadney, 1984; Bhachu, 1991a; Bhachu, 1991b). The nature of these sub-communities and their impact on the overall identity is discussed in more detail below.

The Transformative Identity

The manner by which the aforementioned characteristics of an ethnic group are defined, "emphasized and made organizationally relevant by [actors]" (F. Barth, 1969:16) depends on a fourth dimension of ethnicity, that is, its transformative nature. According to F. Barth (1969) and Edwards (1985), some sense of a group boundary defines the parameters of an ethnic group. Furthermore, this boundary is

flexible in nature. Barth (1969) explains that the cultural content that lies within the ethnic group boundary is susceptible to changes which are caused by internal or external pressures over time. The malleable nature of an ethnic group boundary is an adaptive feature as it allows for the resolution of internal and external conflicts without compromising the boundary's integrity. Thus, while objective, behavioral and subjective characteristics may define an ethnic group, their nature will transform according to the internal pressures of the group and the external pressures of the socio-cultural system in which the group exists.

The development of the Sikh community represents this notion of a malleable outer core and the internal, adaptive elements of a group's identity which alter through time and space. The transformative nature of the Sikh identity and the maintenance of an outer "Sikh" core provides a useful example of the internal dynamics which shape and reshape the boundary of an ethnic group.

The Sikh Identity in Transformation

Over the last ten years, in particular, the worldwide community of Sikhs has been responding to the demands being made on its identity and on the integrity of its outer core. First, since the Indian Sikh crises of the 1980's, Sikhs have faced several external and internal conflicts (Bhachu, 1991a; Koehn, 1991). In particular, since the desecration of their holiest shrine, Sikhs worldwide have been concerned with restoring and safeguarding what the Golden Temple complex represents - "the distinctiveness of Sikh identity" (Koehn, 1991:108). This attack on their main place of worship represented to Sikhs a threat to the survival of the community and the

religion. Internationally, Sikhs responded to this threat by creating organizations which are aimed at aiding Sikhs who are thought to be suppressed in India, and at ensuring the survival of the Sikh community abroad.

In Canada, these organizations serve the community in its relations with the larger society. For example, the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada (F.S.S.C.) created an endowment fund for a Chair in Punjabi language, literature and Sikh studies at the University of British Columbia in 1987. In addition, the F.S.S.C. has called upon the media to represent Sikh issues in an impartial manner. These actions are aimed at promoting Sikh awareness so as to discourage discrimination and maintain Sikh cultural and religious practices worldwide.

In addition to being influenced by the worldwide reaffirmation of Sikh identity, Sikhs inhabiting various countries face their own unique struggles of negotiating their identities with the political, social and economic forces shaping the country in which they live. For example, Parminder Bhachu (1991a) found that British Sikh women's education/career choices are based on the negotiation between egalitarian educational beliefs rooted in Sikh thought, cultural traditions, such as marriage and child-rearing obligations, and the demands of an economically competitive British society which values higher education. In another study, Beatrice Drury (1991) found that Sikh girls in Nottingham abandon, modify or retain certain cultural and religious symbols (e.g. the Five K's) according to the social demands of British society and parental expectations of ethnic identity

maintenance. In the case of Singaporean Sikhs, Dusenbury (1994:18, 21) observes that while the state has

> acquiesced in accepting... Sikhs as a distinct "race" (as well as "religion") and in granting support for Sikh-initiated projects,... Sikhs must [in turn] make certain compromises to conform to the political structure of Singapore, including accepting a depoliticized Sikhism that promises to aschew overt political support for Sikh nationalism in India and to avoid all other forms of political action not sanctioned by the state.

The Sikh Identity: "Hammered Out of Past Inheritance"

Theorists and researchers have attested to the significance of an ethnic group's history in terms of shaping its present identity. Max Weber is one of the earliest proponents emphasizing the role of history in ethnicity construction. As Saram (1989b) explains,

> What Weber observed regarding ethnicity was that identity, consciousness, affiliation and commitment to action, were immensely variable according to the historical experiences of specific ethnic categories and the kinds of political boundaries in which they happen to be located.

Contemporary theorists repeat Weber's view. For example, in her examination of the Mennonite "identity crisis", Daphne N. Winland (1993:119) recognizes the role of history in manufacturing identities. She explains that:

> History provides people with a perception about, or a series of perceptions about their past, enabling them through the selective stressing and negotiation of certain values... History...is a selective medium - the richer the historical fabric, the greater the potential for selection and reinterpretation. [Furthermore], the manner in which the past is invoked is strongly indicative of the circumstances which make the past salient.

Culture/agency integration theorist Margaret Archer shares this view of history in her theory of cultural elaboration. "Cultural elaboration", she summarizes, " is the future which is forged in the present, hammered out of past inheritance by current innovation" (Archer in Ritzer, 1992:435-436).

Researchers have confirmed these theoretical positions by identifying factors involved in the (re)-negotiation of identities, and, consequently, in the re-shaping of an overall ethnic identity. For example, Keya Ganguly's (1992) study has shown that East Indian immigrants to the United States selectively choose memories from their past to reconsolidate present representations of selfhood and identity. Ganguly concluded that the Indian men she interviewed purposely chose to focus on the hardships of their pre-immigrant lifestyles so that they could justify the decision to immigrate to the United States. This study demonstrates the idea that identities are not pre-given. Rather, they are continuously constructed and re-constructed, in this case, according to the purposeful selection of personal memories from a broad historical discourse.

In another study, Dipankar Gupta's (1992) analysis of the Indian Sikh identity illustrates the impact that personal interpretations of history have on the development of an ethnic identity. In his study, he employs the term "ethnic imago" to refer to particular ethnic self-images which are created during times of ethnic strife. He concludes that one Indian Sikh imago which has evolved during the 1980's is that of the "Sikh militant imago". According to Gupta (1992:234), this imago represents to Sikhs that they are "just, religious and humane people, but that

there is a limit beyond which they will not allow themselves to be pushed". Furthermore, Gupta (1992:234) explains that Indian Sikhs [Jat (agrarian caste) Sikhs, in particular] have created this image and "vicariously indulge in [it] on the strength of some true representations of this idealized model". Once generated, Gupta explains, these ethnic imagos "take on an innovative life of their own to add fresh minutiae to the historic memory and bearing of ethnic constitutions" (Gupta, 1992:225).

Conclusion

At present, theories of ethnicity suggest that ethnic identity is a dynamic, complex process. Although there exists some sense of a group boundary which defines the parameters of an ethnic group, this boundary is flexible in nature. The constituent elements of an ethnic group, such as language, religious ideology, religious or cultural symbols and practices, and ethnic foods and dress, are all susceptible to re-evaluation and changes which are caused by internal or external pressures over time and space. That is, the nature of an ethnic group will transform according to the internal pressures of the group and the external pressures of the socio-cultural system in which the group exists. Lastly, research suggests that a change in ethnic identity and consciousness (both at the corporate and individual level) emerges as ethnic group members purposefully select personal memories which are extracted from their ethnic group's history.

THE PROPOSED STUDY

The present study is concerned with exploring and describing how Edmonton Sikh youth express, perceive and construct a personal and corporate sense of Sikh identity. Furthermore, it is concerned with exploring the "situational ethnicity" of the members. That is, it is concerned with exploring the "variability in the affirmation of ethnic identity" (Okamura, 1981:452) among the individuals in this sample of Sikh youth. As advocates of situational ethnicity posit, this is dependent upon a Sikh's social situation and his/her perception of that situation (Okamura, 1981; Mackie and Brinkerhoff, 1984). Since this is an exploratory study of Sikh youth, this thesis will be specifically concerned with exploring how this sample may be suggestive of particular patterns of Sikh identity construction, perception, and expression.

Since the evolution and present form of the Sikh community depended and depends largely on the manner in which Sikhs formulate(d) their past to `forge their present' interpretations of identity, this analysis of the present Edmonton Sikh youth identity will also involve a reference to its historical evolution (i.e. the evolution of the Sikh community) and the selective "historic memories" - in this case, the Sikh crises events since 1984 - held by Sikh youth. By establishing the historical development and continuing evolution of the Sikh community, Edmonton Sikh youth will be placed in a context emphasizing continuity and change in the Sikh identity. Sikh "identity, consciousness, affiliation and commitment to action" will be viewed as being "immensely variable according to

the historical experiences of..." this particular group of Sikh youth and "the kinds of political [and social] boundaries in which they happen to be located" (Saram, 1989b:1).

Research Questions

Several research questions have been formulated for this study:

1. In what way do ethnic group members perceive a sense of ethnic corporate identity?

1.1 In what way do Edmonton Sikh youth perceive the Sikh corporate identity. In other words, what do they consider constitutes being a Sikh?

2. In what way do ethnic group members perceive and express a personal sense of ethnic identity?

2.1 In what way do Edmonton Sikh youth define and express themselves as Sikh?

3. To what extent are selected ethno-religious historical events seen as contributing to ethnic consciousness and identity?

3.1. How do Sikh youth perceive the degree and nature of discrimination against Canadian Sikhs by the Canadian government and non-Sikh Canadian citizens in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises? Based on this perception, what is the perceived impact upon the expression of Sikh identity?

3.2. Did the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple complex and subsequent crisis events impact upon an Edmonton Sikh youth's construction and perception of Sikh identity? In what way?

3.2.1 In what way do ethnic group members construct a sense of ethnic consciousness? Specifically, which sources have Edmonton Sikh youth drawn upon to develop a sense of Sikh consciousness, especially in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises events?

OUTLINE OF THESIS

This chapter provided an overview of the literature on ethnic group identity and boundaries. In addition, it stated the research problem which is to explore the expression, perception and construction of Sikh identity among Edmonton Sikh youth. Chapter two will examine the historical evolution of Sikhism and the Sikh community. Chapter three will outline the exploratory research design for this study. Following this, chapter four will identify the themes, patterns and insights which emerged from the interviews conducted on Edmonton Sikh youth. Lastly, chapter five will involve a summary and conclusion of the findings and offer several recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THE EVOLUTION OF SIKHISM AND THE SIKH COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

In order to appreciate contemporary definitions of Sikh identity and consciousness, it is necessary to outline the historical development of Sikhism and the Sikh community. This chapter describes evolution of Sikhism and the Sikh community both in India and Canada. The first section describes the pre-conditions that led to the birth of Sikhism, and introduces Guru Nanak, the first of ten Sikh Gurus who gave birth to Sikh thought and consciousness. The second section explores the evolution and transformation of the newly formed 16th century Sikh Panth as it evolved over a period of about two hundred years. This section covers the period from 1539 to 1708. This era in Sikh history marks the point at which the Sikh community became an organized, recognized religion. Also during this period, the Sikh Panth went from pacifist to more militant in nature.

Section three examines the creation and development of the Khalsa order and its transformative effect on the nature of the Sikh identity. Specifically, the Khalsa order had its impact on the legal status of a Sikh. Therefore, section four reviews legal definitions of Sikh identity that were formulated during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The early twentieth century also saw the immigration of Indian Sikhs to various parts of the world including Canada. Therefore, the last section of this chapter will describe the settlement patterns of Indian Sikhs in Canada, current population statistics, and contemporary concerns regarding the identity of Canadian Sikh youth.

THE BIRTH OF SIKHISM

Sikh thought began with Guru Nanak in Punjab, India, the homeland of the Sikhs. Its birth was inspired by two apparently conflicting religious ideologies -- Hinduism and Islam -- and the corresponding political, social and cultural climate of the time. Despite the attempts of the Bhakti movement and the Sufi mystics[1], the political, social and economic climate of the Punjab during Guru Nanak's time was corrupt. The politico-administrative order of the Afghan rulers was unjust and exploitive (Grewal, 1990). Even wealthier non-Muslim citizens, such as Hindu traders, were robbed through illegal taxation (K. Singh, 1963a). Any attempt to challenge the political order resulted in severe persecution; therefore, the system remained intact.

The political turmoil had its impact on social and religious practices as well. The exploitation of lower castes[2] was intense. In terms of gender relations, women were reduced to slaves, violated sexually, and degraded mentally. (K. Singh, 1963a; B. Singh, 1978; Grewal 1990). In essence, the value of a woman

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[1]The Hindu Bhaktas and the Muslim Sufi's attempted to minimize the violence between the Muslims and Hindus by promoting the idea of "unity in diversity". Religiously, similar salvation methods were promoted by the Sufis and Bhaktas (i.e. devotion and meditation to one God through activities which would summon the spirit of God's truth such as dancing and singing). As a result, the Indian population culturally coalesced with each other in terms of music, food, dress and customs. This was especially the case in the Punjab (K. Singh, 1963a).

[2] The Hindu Brahmins created the Indian caste system. Generally, the caste system is a rigid system of stratification which assigns individuals a particular social, religious and occupational status. The Brahmins were able to justify this social system particularly by taking control over religious matters. The dissemination of knowledge was their privilege and their means to economic and political control. Generally, they divided the population into four classes: themselves, the rulers, the Kshatriyas, who originally to be the defenders of the country, the Vaishyas, who represented the trading class, and on the lowest rung, the exploited Shudras, who were the workers, the indigenous untouchables, who had virtually no social, economic or political privileges (K. Singh, 1963a).

was measured primarily by men. Among many abusive practices, a women's value was dramatically expressed through one common ritual, Sati[3], which denied a woman the right to survive past the death of her husband (Grewal, 1990). In the religious realm, forced conversion to Islam by Afghan and Moghul rulers persisted despite the efforts of the Sufi mystics and the Bhakti movement (K. Singh, 1963a). Ritualized readings of sacred scriptures produced an ignorant and strongly committed following to each religion. This dangerous combination of ignorance and passionate commitment heightened the antagonism between Muslim and Hindu worshippers.

The tension of this time was most pronounced in the Punjab (Grewal, 1990). The need for a new socio-political, economic and spiritual order was urgent. Understandably so, Punjab's chaotic social and political order gave rise to a spiritual revival with the advent of Guru Nanak, the Punjab's first popular leader in recorded history (K. Singh, 1963a).

Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

Guru Nanak was born in Talwandi, Punjab on April 15, 1469. The point at which Guru Nanak turned his focus exclusively to God came during his first mystic experience. The janam-sakhi[4] describing this event claims that on one early morning when Guru Nanak went to bathe in a river, he experienced a communion

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[3] The Sati ritual, now forbidden in India, required a widow to burn with her dead husband during his cremation ceremony.

[4] Janamsakhis are short narratives written in Punjabi, which describe the birth and life of Guru Nanak. The narrative describing Guru Nanak's first mystic experience is called the Puratan (meaning "old") Janamsakhi (N.G.K. Singh, 1992).

with God. The divine thoughts that passed on to Nanak exposed him to the wonders of God's Truth and explained to him his life mission. Nanak's life was to "be one of praise of [God's Words] (*nam*), charity (*dan*), ablution (*isnan*), service (*seva*), and prayer (*simran*)" (K. Singh, 1963a:31).

Essential Features of Guru Nanak's Spiritual Thought[5]

Guru Nanak formulated a religious doctrine emphasizing five main elements. The first was a belief in one God. Second, Guru Nanak required his disciples to accept the guidance of a Guru or teacher of God's Truth. Third, along with a devotion to spiritual enlightenment, individuals were expected to uphold the responsibilities of their worldly pursuits. Fourth, Guru Nanak emphasized the idea that individuals were not required to be of a particular caste or sex in order to achieve spiritual salvation. Finally, Guru Nanak prescribed the conduct required to achieve spiritual salvation. Specifically, he emphasized the value of work, of giving and sharing one's successes with others, and of engaging in the thought of God.

Transferring Truth Through Time

Guru Nanak died on September 22, 1539. Before his death he named his successor, Lehna. When transferring the Guruship to Lehna, Guru Nanak fell to the ground and bowed in reverence, indicating that Lehna possessed God's Truth. To symbolize the fact that Lehna and Nanak were of the "same light and same ways" (K. Singh, 1963a), Nanak changed Lehna's name to Angad, "Angad" meaning "a

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[5] See Table 1. for a brief description of Guru Nanak's main contributions.

part of my body". With the naming of a new successor, Guru Nanak ensured the continuation of his religious ideology.

With the main principles of Sikhism explained, it is possible to analyze how the Sikh identity as defined by Guru Nanak evolved given the demands of different periods in time. Starting with the work of Guru Angad, the following section outlines the pivotal events in Sikh history which served to shape the Sikh community and Sikh thought.

THE EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE SIKH PANTH[6]

In his attempt to define the Sikh identity, W. H. McLeod (1989a) identifies certain pivotal events in early Sikh history which contributed to the newly emerging features of Sikh identity. Predictably, he begins with Guru Nanak and his following. In summarizing the nature of the Sikh Panth at this early stage of development, McLeod (1989a:19) writes that the "identity was defined by a common loyalty, by common association, and by common practice". Generally, the gathering of the *sangat* (parishes) to sing hymns, to engage in communal meals (*langar*), and to revere a shared philosophy defined this new Nanak-panthi identity.

By the beginning of the 17th century, certain unique features emerged to establish Sikhs as a distinct socio-religious community. The status of Guru was defined and legitimized. The establishment of a legitimized appointment of Gurus marks an important point in Sikh history as it allowed for the continuation and development of the Panth. The declaration that future generations would have the

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[6] See Table 2 for a listing of the ten Sikh Gurus and a summary of their main contributions.

support and guidance of a Guru allowed the community to forge and firmly establish an emerging and fragile identity. The legitimation of a Guru's right to name a successor also strengthened the boundaries between Sikhs and non-Sikhs The establishment of the community was also marked by the body of sacred Sikh literature which was compiled into a formal book of holy scriptures (*Bani Adi Granth*). In addition, a formal place of worship was constructed for each parish (*sangat*), and the whole community of Sikhs had a central place of worship (*Harimandir Sahib*). As the various practical measures designed to establish and maintain the community were introduced, the basic philosophy as defined by Guru Nanak was able to take a strong hold among the devotees. However, the stability of the system did not remain intact for long. External pressures urged a peaceful Sikh community into accepting a more defensive posture.

The event which sparked this transformation was the execution of Guru Arjan ordered by the ruling emperor Jehangir. Threatened by the growing influence of Guru Arjan, Jehangir sentenced Guru Arjan to death. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan paved the way to a new spirit among Sikhs. A mental and physical training designed to defend one's identity was recognized as the next step for preserving the Sikh identity. Thus, a new shape to the identity began to emerge.

Serious problems regarding external pressures did not resume until Guru Tegh Bahadur's pontificate. During this period relations between the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and the Sikhs were strained. Aurangzeb ordered the demolition of Sikh temples across the Punjab. In retaliation, Sikhs destroyed Muslim mosques.

The tension and violence initiated by the imperial powers urged Guru Tegh Bahadur to visit the Punjabi villages that embraced Sikhism. He offered his support and guidance to his followers and others who were being religiously persecuted (K. Singh, 1963a; Grewal, 1990). Part of his support arose from his compositions [in particular, Sukhmuni Sahib Path (psalm of peace)] which "[revealed the Guru] as a prophet of reassurance in a trying situation" (Grewal, 1990:71). This "public demonstration of his convictions" (Grewal, 1990:72) and the wide acceptance he gained from the people he encountered, threatened Aurangzeb's rule. Consequently, Guru Tegh Bahadur was "declared an absconder and a warrant was issued for his arrest" (K. Singh, 1963a:73). Soon thereafter the Guru was sentenced to death and executed on November 11, 1675. His official crime was his refusal to accept Islam.

With the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur another dimension to the evolving Sikh identity emerged - the Khalsa. Its creation, development and significant impact on the nature of the Sikh identity are discussed in the following section.

THE KHALSA AND THE SIKH IDENTITY

Before his execution, Guru Tegh Bahadur named his son, Gobind, the successor. As Grewal (1990:76) states, "In terms of his historical situation, his problem was to defend the claims of conscience against external interference". The Khalsa and the corresponding code of conduct was enacted to solve this problem.

The Khalsa

McLeod (1989a) offers three possible reasons for the creation of the Khalsa. The first reason involves the responsibility of protecting and acknowledging one's identity and that of others. At the beheading of Guru Tegh Bahadur, many Sikhs concealed their identity and fled in fear thinking they may suffer a similar fate. Sikh scriptures suggest that Guru Gobind Singh prescribed a distinctive outward appearance to ensure "that Sikhs would never again be able to take refuge in anonymity" (McLeod, 1989a:27). Second, the severe persecution faced by Sikhs and other religious minorities compelled the Guru to develop a formal system of defense. Third, recognizing the disintegration and corruption of the masand system, Guru Gobind Singh decided to eliminate it, and "[summoned] all Sikhs to place themselves under his own direct supervision" (McLeod, 1989a:27). He discouraged the recognition and perpetuation of caste by giving all his male disciples the surname "Singh" (meaning lion), and to all female disciples he gave the name "Kaur" (meaning princess). With this action, the Guru attempted to re-introduce the principle of unity and equality within the Sikh Panth (Grewal, 1990).

The Khalsa was formally instituted on Vaisakhi Day 1699. At this ceremony, the first five Sikhs, the "cherished five" (*panj piare*) were initiated into the Khalsa. The code of conduct and purpose of the Khalsa (the Rahit) were revealed by Guru Gobind Singh on that day. According to McLeod (1989a:30), the Rahit "is the Khalsa way of life, the system of belief and distinctive behavior

which all who accept Khalsa initiation are expected to observe"[7].

With the introduction and acceptance of the Khalsa order, the socio-religious identity of the Sikhs "became more distinctly pronounced than that of the earlier Sikhs" (Grewal, 1990:77). Outsiders recognized Sikhs as a united force which actively sought out those who oppressed human rights and freedoms. During the pontificate of Guru Gobind Singh, this united force was reflected in the growing strength of the Khalsa army. Guru Gobind Singh and his army, made up of mostly *Jat* peasantry (K. Singh, 1963a), paved the way for an agrarian uprising in Punjab which seriously undermined Mughal rule.

Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh declared that the succession of Gurus was to cease after his death. The Guru Granth Sahib was to succeed Guru Gobind Singh, and, thereafter, act as Guru for all time. To deal with spiritual matters, the Panth was to seek guidance from the Granth Sahib. In the case of temporal matters, Guru Gobind Singh invested power in the Panth. The members of the Panth were expected to reach decisions concerning the community on their own by using, of course, the Guru Granth Sahib as the main source of inspiration and support (McLeod, 1989a; K. Singh, 1963a). Thus, the Guru remains "ever-available for the kind of situational guidance which changing circumstances require" (McLeod, 1989a:34).

In the years following Guru Gobind Singh's death, the Khalsa army gained more strength. In 1801, with the aid of his Khalsa army, Ranjit Singh became

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[7] Table 3 outlines the main features of the Rahit.

Maharajah of the Punjab (McLeod, 1989a). Since the majority of men in his army and members of his administration were Sikh, the Maharajah had risen the Sikh community to a sovereign status (Grewal, 1990). However, soon after the death of Ranjit Singh, the Khalsa order began to lose its force. Although the Punjab was the last province in India to give up their independence to the British, the Khalsa army eventually lost its battle with them. Along with its weakening power, the traditions of the Khalsa were eroding. For example, Hindu traditions re-surfaced, the most threatening of which was the strengthening of caste affiliations and the use of idols in Gurdwaras (McLeod, 1989a). As a result of these threats to its stability, an attempt was made to re-define the boundaries of the Panth.

Re-defining the Panth

Throughout the succession of Gurus, several claims to the guruship had been made. Some claimants gathered more support than others and throughout the years they negotiated their own understanding of the basic Sikh philosophy as defined by Guru Nanak. One of the first breaks occurred at the naming of Guru Nanak's successor. Guru Nanak's son, Sri Chand, claimed he was the true successor, not Guru Angad. His claim gathered support and formed a community known as the *Udasis*. In general, "they produced an interpretation of Sikhism that made them rather `unorthodox' from the viewpoint of the Singhs" (Grewal, 1990:117). Other groups, such as the Nirankaris and the Namdharis asserted their

claim on defining Sikhism as well[8].

Even the Khalsa order, which was meant to encourage unity among the Sikhs, created `Sikh types'; the Khalsa Sikh and the non-Khalsa Sikh. According to McLeod (1989a), there is no evidence to suggest that all who did not accept Khalsa initiation would be expelled from the Panth. Therefore, the majority of Khatris and Brahmans who did not enter the Khalsa order were still considered Sikhs. Members of the Singh Sabha organization (established in 1873), however, had a problem with this view and the fact that groups, such as the Nirankaris, opposed the spirit of the Khalsa (McLeod, 1989a). Their expressed concern was that because the boundaries of the Sikh community were not distinct, the centre of Sikh thought would become indistinct as well. The Singh Sabha reformers were intent on defining firm and clear boundaries around the Panth. The following section examines how the Singh Sabha movement and subsequent interest groups acted to re-negotiate the corporate identity of the Sikh Panth.

INDIAN SIKH IDENTITY IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

The Singh Sabha reformers argued that the Sikh Panth required intense re-evaluation and a firm identity. At various levels they claimed to witness the deterioration of the boundaries which distinguished a Sikh from a non-Sikh. For example, at the village level, it became difficult to culturally distinguish between a Sikh and a Hindu. Gurdwaras were housing idols, and affiliations to a caste

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[8] Generally, Nirankaris stress the doctrine of *nam simran* over the orthodox Khalsa tradition. In contrast, Namdharis, while acknowledging the value of the Guru Granth, more strongly emphasize the mission of Guru Gobind Singh (Grewal, 1990; McLeod, 1989a).

strongly persisted. Although the "British policy of insisting on Khalsa observances in the Indian Army" (McLeod, 1989a:73) aided the Singh Sabha movement, it did not have influence on the total Sikh population.

According to McLeod (1989a), the Singh Sabha reformers abandoned or significantly modified certain features of the Rahit. In particular, the traditional hostility towards Muslims in the time of Guru Gobind Singh was strongly discouraged. Practices were modified. For example, in the case of smoking, all forms of smoking were banned, not only the traditional ban on the *Hookah*. Distinctive Sikh rituals were re-instated. For example, legislation was passed to enforce the practice of the Sikh marriage ceremony, *Anand Karaj*. This discouraged the practice of the commonly performed ceremony whose nature was, according to the Singh Sabhas, "suspiciously" Hindu.

Above all, an attempt was made to negotiate the terms of the Rahit ideology. In this process, the question of "Who should be considered a Sikh?" was answered. For Singh Sabha reformers, a Sikh was to be strongly associated with the Khalsa identity. Those who did not conform to the Khalsa ideal were not acknowledged as Sikh. Despite the influence of this movement, its inflexible position was contested.

The influence of the Singh Sabha reformers continued into the early 20th century. Due to the movement, much literature was written in an attempt to define Sikhs in relation to Sikhism. New Sikh committees were created. The most influential organizations [i.e. the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee

(S.G.P.C.) and the Shiromani Akali Dal] supported the Khalsa objectives of the Singh Sabha movement. These organizations were instrumental in the formulation of legal definitions of Sikh identity. Their efforts eventually resulted in a statutory definition of a Sikh which was incorporated into The Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925. According to this definition (McLeod, 1989a:93), a Sikh is "a person who professes the Sikh religion". This definition was to be followed by a declaration stating "I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in the Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the ten Gurus, and that I have no other religion." (McLeod, 1989a:93). According to McLeod, the last statement declaring "I have no other religion" concerned certain Sahaj-dhari Sikhs who often categorized themselves as both Hindu and Sikh. They insisted that the "Khalsa is a voluntary society within the Sikh Panth" (McLeod, 1989a:74).

In 1950, a sub-committee of the S.G.P.C. attempted to accommodate the various Sikh types. The committee published a manuscript called the *Sikh Rahit Maryada*. According to McLeod (1989a:95), this publication provides "a statement of orthodox Sikh belief and normative Sikh conduct [which] now stands virtually unchallenged". In its statement of Sikh identity, the manual requires a Sikh "to believe in..." the Khalsa initiation ceremony (*Amrit Sanskar*). This statement makes no attempt to exclude those who choose not to take *Amrit*. Rather, it insists that a Sikh must "*affirm the value* of doing so" (McLeod, 1989a:96). Thus, the statement accepts both Kes-dhari *and* Sahaj-dhari into the Sikh Panth.

Conclusions

The re-defining of the Panth did not cease after the publication of the *Sikh Rahit Maryada.* Within Delhi, India, the Delhi Gurdwara Act 82 of 1971 was passed to exclude Sahaj-dhari Sikhs from the Panth. The point well worth noting here is that the attempt to define the boundaries of Sikh identity continued to persist even after a well-recognized document came into being. What does this say about the Sikh corporate identity?

Generally, there is no single authority which is indisputably recognized as providing *a single* definition of Sikh identity. This fact illustrates well the notion of transforming identities and the evolving, adaptive nature of an ethnic group. Within the Sikh community, temporal influences and geographically dispersed sangats dictate the manner by which the community will be defined at the corporate, sub-community and individual level.

Summary

Over a period of about four hundred years (1539-1971), the Indian Sikh Panth transformed from a small group of Nanak-Panth devotees to a heterogeneous socio-religious community. In terms of identity construction, the introduction of the Khalsa order had a significant impact. While it strengthened Sikh consciousness and more precisely defined the unique quality of the Sikh identity, it, ironically, created divisions among Sikh devotees (i.e. Khalsa and non-Khalsa Sikhs). The development of legal definitions of Sikh identity reflect the internal struggle to identify the nature of the boundaries which encompass the Sikh Panth. The result

of these efforts, however, does not reflect a definitive answer to the question "What is Sikh identity?". Rather, it reflects a process by which the community has historically found itself in - that is, the evolution and adaptation of an identity.

As mentioned in chapter one, immigration patterns contribute to this evolutionary process. Therefore, the next section regresses to the early 20th century and examines the time during which Punjabi Sikhs began immigrating to Canada.

THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE OF PUNJABI SIKHS

From its past, the present Sikh Panth inherits a continuity which derives primarily from a now established Sikh doctrine, the main support that sustains the Sikh ethno-religious boundary. Despite factors affecting the shape of the Sikh boundaries, a primary one being the migration of Punjabi Sikhs to various parts of the world, it is argued that the Sikh ethno-religious boundary persists to this day as Sikhs continue to hold "a subjective belief in their common descent" (Roth & Wittich, 1968:389), and a "persisting sense of groupness" (Edwards & Doucette, 1987:54).

However, due to factors like migration, the identity of the present Sikh corporate community, as in the past, continues to undergo several changes both culturally and religiously. Each Sikh sub-community worldwide represents a unique piece of the overall identity which forms the Sikh Panth.

The immigration experience of Sikhs has been studied extensively (K. Singh, 1963b; Hess, 1974; Chan, 1979; Santry, 1982; Chadney, 1984; LaBrack, 1988; Gonzales, 1987; Leonard, 1987; Johnston, 1988). Much of the recent

research focuses on Sikh communities which have long been established in locations outside of the Punjab in areas such as Britain, California and Vancouver. These Sikh communities, because of their size and age, offer researchers an opportunity to explore historically the changing face of the Sikh identity as it evolved and continues to evolve in foreign environments.

Sikhs in Canada: Immigration and Settlement

In Canada, Sikh immigration began in the early twentieth century. Approximately 5000 South Asians, the majority of whom were Sikh (90%), settled in British Columbia before the 1908 ban on Asian immigration was put into effect (Buchignani, 1988). With the introduction of the 1908 and 1910 immigration acts (see Kalbach, 1970), the entry of South Asian immigrants, in particular, was significantly curtailed. According to K. Singh (1963b:171),

> The Canadian government... passed two orders-in-council to deal with the ingress of Indian nationals abroad. One raised the sum of money required to be in the possession of an intending immigrant from $25 to $200; the other authorized the minister of the interior to prohibit entry of travellers unless they came "from the country of their birth or citizenship by a continuous journey, and on through tickets purchased before leaving the country of their birth or citizenship". Both these orders were directed specifically against the Indians.

These immigration acts also restricted the type of employment "undesirable" (Kalbach, 1970:15) immigrants could hold. For example, because Asian immigrants were denied the vote, they were also "denied the right to practice" professions, such as law and pharmacy, "because eligibility to those fields was limited to those on the voter's list" (Bolaria in Fry, 1984:137). Early

immigrants were, thus, forced to find exploitive employment in "lumber mills and mines... or in laying the track of the Canadian Pacific Railway" (K. Singh, 1963b:168).

Despite racial animosity and restrictions placed on immigration, employment and voting privileges (Palmer & Palmer, 1985), Sikhs established themselves in British Columbia. The community gained economic stability and, consequently, was able to concentrate on re-establishing a sense of Sikh identity. This was accomplished primarily through the establishment in 1907 of a Sikh organization known as the Khalsa Diwan society which "was organized in Vancouver with branches at Victoria, Abbotsford, New Westminster, Fraser Mills, Duncan Coombs, and Ocean Falls" (K. Singh, 1963b: 174). The society's main objective was to construct Sikh Temples (gurdwaras) throughout British Columbia and to promote educational and religious pursuits related to Sikhism. However, because the gurdwaras acted as centers for Sikh solidarity (Chadney, 1984) "problems connected with immigration and incidents of racial discrimination" (K. Singh, 1963b:174) eventually became main issues with which to contend. The Khalsa Diwan society was, however, not the only organization designed to protect the rights of Sikhs. In Vancouver, the United India League was formed in 1907 while the more popular Ghadr (meaning "revolution") party was established in 1913 (K. Singh, 1963b). According to Tatla, (1991:xiv) supporters of the Ghadr party

> were inspired to go back to Punjab to wage a revolutionary struggle against British rule in India. The imperial rule at home was perceived to be the root cause of the daily humiliations [i.e. "immigration controls" and "racial insults"] suffered by Punjabi migrants in distant lands.

Despite the existence of these organizations, discrimination against Indian immigrants persisted. An outstanding example of this discrimination occurred with the "arrival of the Komagata Maru in Canadian waters" (K. Singh, 1963b:177).

The *Komagata Maru* and the Ghadr Movement

Following the dictates of the "continuous passage" order, a ship, the *Komagata Maru*, left Hong Kong harbour in 1914 with 323 aspiring immigrants (90% of whom were Sikh) on board. The organizer of this venture was Gurdit Singh, a wealthy businessman from Singapore who "chartered the vessel for six months and collected his passengers from India and ports en route: Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe, and Yokohama" (K. Singh, 1963b: 178). The ship arrived at its Vancouver destination on May 21, 1914. Considering their position on immigration, the Canadian government reacted negatively to this, as British Columbian papers called it, "mounting Oriental invasion" (K. Singh, 1963b: 178) by denying entry to the passengers. Attempted negotiations with the government failed, and officials insisted upon the ship's departure. The pressure to depart was legally enforced as the ship's owner was ordered to pay charter dues which he could pay only "after he had fulfilled his contract with the passengers and had sold the cargo which he had on board" (K. Singh, 1963b:178). Despite the fundraising support of Sikh Canadians who raised $22 000, the Canadian government remained

tied to its original position. The government ordered the ship and its passengers to leave Canada on July 23, 1914 (Tatla, 1991:xiv).

This incident heightened the revolutionary cries of the Ghadr supporters who now were determined to forcibly overthrow British rule in India. When World War I broke out, Ghadrites from "Canada, the United States, Hong Kong, Shanghai, China, Straits Settlements, Borneo, Japan and the Philippines" (K. Singh, 1963b:182) attempted to "stir up rebellion in every corner of the country [India]".[9] This goal, however, failed primarily due to a lack of arms, experience and strong leadership (K. Singh, 1963b).

Although the goal to overthrow was not realized, the Ghadr movement redefined the political relationship between the Sikh community and the British rulers as it "marked the beginning of the end of three quarters of a century of unquestioned loyalty to the British Raj" (K. Singh, 1963b:190). In addition, as Tatla (1991:xiv) writes,

> the Ghadr movement and *Komagata Maru* voyage have become a part of many Sikhs' memory and consciousness. The visual representations of these episodes in Gurdwaras and in Punjabi literature in Canada and beyond has kept them in popular memory.

The Inter-War and Post-World War II Period in Canada

During the period between the two World Wars the Canadian immigration ban continued to remain in effect. Only the wives and children of visible

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[9] These words were uttered in 1914 by Ram Chandra, a leader of the Ghadr party in San Francisco.

minorities already in Canada were allowed to enter. Despite laws being challenged, immigration remained restricted. In addition, because of the racial hostility associated with the immigration ban described above, approximately 4000 Sikhs left Canada to return to India or to re-settle in the United States (Buchignani, 1985). The remaining Canadian Sikhs (less than 1500), however, managed to survive economically. The majority of these Canadian Sikhs remained employed at saw mills or railroads (Buchignani 1985), and because of the security of an established Sikh community in British Columbia, large numbers of Sikhs chose not to settle in other parts of Canada until the 1960's (Buchignani, 1985).

In 1947, after India gained independence from British rule, the Canadian government found it difficult "to allow British Columbia's restrictions on South Asians; unlike its colonial predecessor, the newly independent Indian government would not quietly accept such discrimination against its nationals" (Buchignani, 1985:418). Hence, in 1947, both orders of the immigration ban were lifted, and all South Asians were given the right to vote. In the 1950's, a quota system was introduced to actively encourage the immigration of South Asians from India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Buchignani, 1985). In the 1960's, due to continued liberal immigration policies and the high demand for professionals, a large influx of educated Sikhs began to immigrate to other areas in Canada such as Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary (Buchignani, 1985). These Sikhs came not only from Punjab, but, particularly in the 1970's, from Britain and East Africa (Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania). This influx paved the way for other immigrating Sikhs who

were occupationally both skilled and unskilled. In the 1970's and 1980's, many Sikhs started their own businesses as in Alberta [i.e. "...small stores, travel agencies and other small businesses, [such as]... the self-owned taxi" (Buchignani, 1985:422)]. Pursuing careers in real estate and development became popular as well.

In Alberta, as the size of Sikh communities grew, community institutions were developed which, as in British Columbia, acted to enhance in-group identification and group closure. These institutions include the Singh Society of Calgary established in 1979, and the Sikh Society of Alberta established in 1970 (Buchignani, 1985). At present, there are five major Gurdwaras in Edmonton. They are: the Gurdwara Siri Guru Singh Sabha Society which is presently located in the southside of Edmonton. This gurdwara was the first to be established in Edmonton and was founded by Sampuran Singh Roy in 1977; the Millwoods Gurdwara located in the southside of Edmonton; the Nanaksar Gurdwara located in northeast Edmonton; and the Siri Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara of Edmonton located in the Northwest end of Edmonton[10].

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[10]While there are no fundamental differences among the gurdwaras regarding religious ideology and observance, some gurdwaras, such as Siri Guru Singh Sabha Society and Siri Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara of Edmonton, are particularly supportive of the struggle for Khalistan. Nanaksar Gurdwara openly discourages political activism, especially with respect to Khalistan, and Millwoods Gurdwara is neutral regarding the Khalistan issue.

Current Population Statistics

The most current data regarding the Canadian Sikh population is found in the 1991 Canadian Census entitled, Religions in Canada: The Nation[11], which provides national, provincial and municipal statistics. In terms of national statistics, 147, 440 people (75, 570 males and 71, 870 females) indicated that they are Sikh. Provincial statistics indicate that Sikhs inhabit all twelve provinces. Considering that the overall population of Sikhs in Canada is relatively small, this migration pattern is particularly unique. Despite this diffuse pattern, however Sikhs are concentrated in particular regions of Canada. British Columbia (74, 580)[12], for example, has the highest concentration of Sikhs in Canada. Following British Columbia are Ontario (50, 085) and Alberta (13, 550).

Municipal statistics indicate that in Vancouver, there are at least 49, 625 Sikhs. The second highest concentration of Sikhs is in Toronto where there are at least 41, 450 Sikhs (21, 540 males; 19, 910 females). Finally, the third highest concentration of Sikhs is in Edmonton where there are at least, 6480 Sikhs (3455 males, 3020 females); and in Calgary where there are at least 6075 Sikhs (3120

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[11] Statistics Canada 1991 census figures "were collected from every household in Canada" (Statistics Canada, 1993:1). It is necessary to note that only one in every five individuals in the sample were asked to identify their religion (20% Sample Data). Subsequently, the "data collected on [this] sample basis were weighted up to provide estimates of the entire population excluding institutional residents". Because "weighted counts are subject to sampling variability,... the weighted count may differ from that shown in tabulations containing data collected on a 100% basis" (Statistics Canada, 1993:5). Therefore, these statistics may be underestimates of the actual population of Sikhs in any given location.

[12]It should be noted that this statistic may be a gross underestimate of the actual population of Sikhs in British Columbia. According to an unofficial estimate, Langdon (1994) suggests that in British Columbia alone Sikhs number approximately 150, 000.

males; 2955 females)[13].

The Impact of the 1984 Sikh Crises

In the period since the 1984 Sikh crises, Sikhs worldwide have become acutely aware of their status as a distinct ethno-religious group and have over the past ten years, in particular, been forced to defend their religious and human rights in the face of much controversy. For example, on June 23, 1985 an Air India plane flying from Toronto to London exploded over the Atlantic ocean. Investigations revealed that the explosion resulted from a bomb planted in the plane. The initial suspects were Sikhs. However, subsequent investigations have suggested that the "Indian government intelligence infiltrated the Canadian Sikh community to discredit its campaign to create an independent state of Khalistan..." (Kashmeri & McAndrew, 1989b: A31). This controversy, according to Kashmeri & McAndrew (1989a:v), ultimately "left the Sikh community estranged from Canadian society". This sense of estrangement, however, was not fuelled solely by the Air India controversy. Subsequent issues relating to Canadian Sikhs, such as the right to wear a kirpan in a public place, and the right to wear a turban in the R. C. M. P. and Royal Canadian Legion halls, has further alienated Canadian Sikhs from Canadian society.

The result of all this tension is that Canadian Sikhs have been particularly sensitive about the representation of their identity. While some steps have been taken by the Sikh community to create positive relations between Sikhs and the

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[13]Again, these statistics may be underestimates of the actual population of Sikhs in Calgary and Edmonton.

Canadian society (i.e. using the media to inform Canadian citizens of Sikh issues), there are differences within the community regarding their appropriate representation. For example, a recent issue involves University of British Columbia Professor Harjot Oberoi, the chair of Punjabi Language, Literature and Sikh Studies in the department of Asian Studies (Langdon, 1994). Oberoi has been accused by some members of the Canadian Sikh community of "distorting the Sikh religion" (Langdon, 1994:8) in his recent book entitled, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Langdon, 1994).

While internal conflicts have arisen, pressures to build a strong, united community also exist. For example, Sikh credit unions have been established in British Columbia. In addition, the Khalsa Credit Union is currently in its early stages of development in both Edmonton and Calgary. Credit union executives in Edmonton report that the idea of a Sikh credit union is being well received by Sikhs in eastern Canadian provinces as well. With respect to the impact of the 1984 crises, it is quite probable that the Khalsa Credit Union may not have gathered the strong support it is accruing had it not been for the events of 1984 and the sense of urgency it created to secure the continuity and stability of the Sikh way of life in Alberta; in this case, the financial security of Sikhs.

The Concern for Sikh Youth

Another example of the pressure to forge a strong Canadian Sikh community, and integral to the economic situation of Sikhs, is the community's

concern for supporting the next generation of Canadian Sikhs. One of the main concerns of the community is that due to the assimilationist effects of mainstream society, Sikh youth may not be retaining vital aspects of their Sikh heritage. The Sikh crises over the last ten years, in particular, may have heightened this concern as members of the older generation have become more conscious and protective of the Sikh way of life. Considering that a large number of Canadian Sikhs are youth, this concern is not surprising. It is estimated that youth constitute at least 25% of the Sikh population in British Columbia and Ontario. In Alberta, at least 4065 Sikhs (2130 males; 1935 females) are less than 15 years; at least 1870 Sikhs (995 males; 880 females) are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years; and at least 4995 Sikhs (2645 males; 2350 females) are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four years (Statistics Canada, 1993).

To ensure that this large portion of Sikh youth retain their cultural and religious heritage, funding for annual Sikh youth camps (in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and California) is stressed. In addition, these youth camps have placed a greater focus on enlightening Sikh youth about their religious and cultural identity particularly in the period since 1984. In addition, since 1984, more emphasis has been placed on the development and success of Sikh schools which are aimed at promoting the Sikh religious way of life and the Punjabi language, and at offering young Sikhs a high standard of education.

Although their actions may not be directly influenced by the Sikh crises events, Sikh youth have been active as well in forming their own associations,

particularly within universities. For example, within Alberta, the University of Alberta in Edmonton supports the Punjabi Students Association and the United Sikh Students Association. In addition, the University of Calgary has a similar organization for Sikh youth. Also, a sub-committee for Sikh youth exists within the Sikh Edmonton Women's Association which has been successful in holding social functions for Edmonton Sikh youth.

Summary

Since the early twentieth century Sikhs have resided in Canada. Their Canadian roots are traced to British Columbia where the community established a strong ethnic enclave within a racially hostile environment. Although the size of the Sikh population was threatened by restrictive immigration laws and Sikh emigration to India and the United States, the Sikh community continued to flourish primarily in British Columbia. In the 1960's, due to liberal immigration laws, a large influx of educated Sikhs began to immigrate to other areas in Canada such as Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary. Current statistics drawn from the 1991 Canadian census indicate that, at present, there are no less than 147 000 Sikhs in Canada. Although Sikhs are spread throughout Canada, they are primarily concentrated in British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta.

Since the late 1960's to the present day, Alberta Sikhs have established themselves economically and have developed institutions, particularly gurdwaras, designed to promote and sustain the Sikh religion and culture. Since the recent crises of 1984, Alberta Sikhs and other Canadian Sikhs have placed even more

emphasis on ensuring the continuity of the Sikh way of life within Canada despite some perceived opposition from non-Sikh Canadian citizens and the Indian government. Particular concern has been given to the growing population of Canadian Sikh youth. Sikh youth camps, Sikh schools, and Sikh youth organizations are aimed at promoting Sikh awareness, allowing Sikh youth to meet each other, and at building a successful future for Sikh youth in Canada.

Conclusion

Although there is evidence of institutions which promote in-group identification among Alberta Sikhs, there are no in-depth examinations of how these institutions and other factors promote Sikh identity among Alberta Sikhs. To demonstrate the expression of Sikh identity among Alberta Sikhs, studies like those conducted on Vancouver, California and British Sikh communities (Chadney, 1984; Bhachu, 1991a; Bhachu, 1991b; Koehn, 1991; La Brack, 1988) are required. For example, in his examination of Vancouver Sikhs, Chadney (1984) studied this community's ability to maintain and perpetuate the Sikh identity. Specifically, Chadney extensively examined the interaction among various influences which shape ethnic identity maintenance, such as immigration patterns, the family, economic patterns, internal and external politics, and religious functions and adaptations. The present study parallels Chadney's analysis in that it explores the identity of Edmonton Sikhs, particularly Sikh youth. It is believed that the nature of this identity reflects both the evolution of the culture and religion of Punjabi Sikhs, and the ethnic development of Canadian Sikhs as both distinctly separate

histories have created the foundation upon which the next generation of Canadian Sikhs are developing their Sikh identity and Sikh awareness (Abu-Laban, 1989). The following chapter outlines the research design developed to explore the nature of the Sikh identity and consciousness among Edmonton Sikh youth.

CHAPTER THREE: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH DESIGN

DATA COLLECTION

Since the purpose of this study is to explore the features associated with the Edmonton Sikh identity among the community's youth[1], an "intimate familiarity" (Lofland, 1976:8) with informants was required. This was best accomplished through intensive interviewing. General themes guided the interviews and a semi-structured, open-ended format was employed. This interview format allowed for the range of possible, unanticipated responses expressed within the boundaries of each theme.

SUBJECTS

Nineteen Edmonton Sikh youth (9 males and 10 females; 18 to 30 years) constitute the sample. This convenience sample was collected from two main sources:

1. The University of Alberta Sikh students. A non-random snowball procedure was employed.

2. Informal contacts. A non-random snowball procedure was employed.

These two sources served to enhance the variation among respondents in terms of political and spiritual orientation, and status differences.

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[1] Research conducted on the transition to adulthood reveals that individuals often do not reach the stage of adulthood until the age of thirty. Consequently, youth has been broadly referred to as the younger generation and includes children, adolescents and young adults. This study looks at young adults or the younger generation of Sikhs (Keniston, 1970; Roscoe & Peterson, 1984; Atwater, 1992).

PROCEDURE

An interview format was designed to explore the nature of the Edmonton Sikh identity and consciousness. Twenty-seven questions were developed. Fourteen questions address Sikh identity and thirteen questions address consciousness. Questions were designed to explore the concepts in terms of their objective, behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. The interview schedule was designed to accommodate English speaking respondents only.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The interview was pre-tested on five Sikh individuals. The interviews were conducted on the full sample following the pre-test. All respondents were contacted by phone or in person, at which time the place and time of the interview meeting was decided upon.

VARIABLES

Two main concepts for this study require operationalization; Sikh identity and consciousness[2].

SIKH IDENTITY

In keeping with the theory that ethnicity is an evolving and dynamic process rather than a static phenomenon, ethnic identity is defined in this study as having a transformative nature. Specifically, the concept is viewed as being dependent upon several interacting variables such as background characteristics of an ethnic group member and his/her corresponding values and practices (Winland, 1993).

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[2] It will not be suggested that the level and degree of consciousness causes the nature of Sikh identity to transform. Instead, it will be demonstrated how the two concepts interact with each other.

Based on this definition, three sets of questions have been developed to explore ethnic identity. The first set measures the background characteristics of the respondent. The second set explores respondents' perceptions of what they believe defines a Sikh (corporate identity). The third set explores how the respondent defines him/herself as a Sikh in terms of practices and classification of Sikh type (individual identification).

Background Characteristics

1. **Sex,**
2. **Birth place,**
3. **Age at immigration to Canada,**
4. **marital status.**

The Sikh Corporate Identity

1. Punjabi literacy level and perceived importance of the Punjabi language.

The Punjabi language is the mother-tongue of the Sikh community. It is considered to be a strong indicator measuring Sikh ethnic identity.

2. Perceived definition of the Sikh Panth.

This indicator of Sikh identity explores an individual's perception of who should be considered a Sikh. For example, some orthodox Amrit-dhari Sikhs (baptised Sikhs) consider only baptized members of the Khalsa to be included in the Panth (see glossary).

3. Perceived importance of caste.

In the Sikh doctrine, caste identification is discouraged. All Sikhs, regardless of caste, are to be considered equal in the spiritual and secular domains. However, due to the entrenched nature of the caste system, Sikhs have not been

completely successful in avoiding its influence. Measuring the perceived importance of caste detects the extent to which the caste system plays a role in defining the Sikh identity.

4. Perceived importance of having a separate Sikh nation called Khalistan.

5. Perceived importance of observing the Five K's (see glossary).

6. Perceived importance of maintaining ties.

Individual Identification

1. Perceived importance of maintaining ties.

2. Perceived importance of caste.

3. Perceived importance of observing the Five K's (see Glossary).

4. Classifying self according to Sikh type.

SIKH CONSCIOUSNESS

For the purposes of this study, ethnic consciousness is defined as the nature and degree of awareness an Edmonton Sikh has of the present state of the Edmonton Sikh community and the Sikh community internationally. The measure of ethnic consciousness is divided into three sets - the media, organizational and informal involvement, and political and social awareness and perceptions.

The Media

This set measures how respondents' Sikh community consciousness is influenced by the media. It includes the following items:

1. **Awareness of Sikh television programs,**
2. **Watching Sikh television,**

3. Reading Sikh publications,

4. Sources of information which address the governmental, religious, and political affairs of Sikhs in India.

Organizational And Informal Involvement With The Sikh Community

This set measures consciousness in terms of respondents' involvement with other Sikhs and in community institutions. The following items are included:

1. Type of community involvement,

2. Church attendance.

Political And Social Awareness And Perceptions

This set measures respondents' awareness and perceptions of the present political and social situation of the Sikh community. This is measured by the following items:

1. Awareness of political, governmental and religious affairs of Sikhs in India.

2. Perception of conflict between Indian Sikhs and the Indian government.

3. Perception of violence between Indian Sikhs and the Indian government.

4. Perceived effectiveness of national and international organizations which are aimed at resolving the conflict between Indian Sikhs and the Indian government.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND IDENTITY

1. Perceived threat to the legitimacy of the Canadian Sikh way of life.

2. Perceived degree and nature of discrimination against Canadian Sikhs by the Canadian government and non-Sikh Canadian citizens.

3. The impact of the conflict between Sikhs and the Indian government.

4. Change in religious practices due to attack on the Golden Temple

complex.

The identity and consciousness categories will serve as general themes which will guide the interviews.

METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

In terms of methodology, a main concern involves the status of the researcher. As I am member of the Sikh community, and, in particular, a member of the Sikh youth, the immediate question that comes to mind is: "Does the fact that the researcher is a member of the Sikh community compromise her social scientific objectivity?" Since I, myself, am not immune to Sikh identity construction, my own personal perception of the Sikh identity may have been altered in my interaction with a participant(s) which, in turn, may have influenced the direction I chose to proceed with in my interviews with subsequent respondents. I may have, for example, emphasized certain aspects of Sikh identity over others due to this interaction. Does this pose a problem?

Hermeneutic theorists (Gadamer, 1975; Giddens; 1976) dealing with the issue of epistemology suggest that it does not. In the past, maintaining an objective standpoint to gain "true" knowledge was strongly emphasized. Thus, research in minority communities required the observation of an outsider who could access "unprejudiced knowledge about groups" (Zinn, 1979:210) of which he/she is not a member.

Current debates on epistemology, however, recognize the researcher as actor in the construction of knowledge and question his/her seemingly divorced,

unattached character. "Concerned in the processes which precede and underlie interpretive methods" (Outhwaite in Skinner, 1990:31), Gadamer (Outhwaite in Skinner, 1990:25,26), a German hermeneutic philosopher, explains that

> Preconceptions and prejudices are what make understanding possible in the first place. They are bound up with our awareness of the historical influence or effectivity of the text; and without this awareness we would not understand it... Understanding is not a matter of forgetting our own horizon of meanings and putting ourselves within that of the alien text or alien society; it means merging or fusing our horizons with theirs... our 'prejudices' are not so much an obstacle to knowledge so much as a condition of knowledge.

Therefore, the interpretation of knowledge is, at least in part, dependent upon the recognition of the position of the researcher, his/her preconceptions and prejudices, and his/her historical relationship with that which is observed.

Feminist theorists, in particular, recognize this role of the researcher in the construction of knowledge. According to Haraway (1988:581), "feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges" where "rational knowledge is a process of on-going critical interpretation among fields of interpreters and decoders" (Haraway, 1988:590). Therefore, "science becomes the paradigmatic model, not of closure, but of that which is contestable and contested" (Haraway, 1988:590); and knowledge, as Gadamer's "hermeneutic circle" suggests, is continuously extracted from the interactive process between the researcher and the "alien text" or the "alien society". From this perspective, the epistemological question is not "Are we cultivating true knowledge?", but rather "What kind of knowledge are we cultivating?" The researcher, thus, must become aware of the nature and parameters of knowledge which are being sought and the methods by which that knowledge can be best extracted.

Therefore, although the nature of the knowledge extracted from the present study has been influenced by my personal perceptions and constructions of Sikh identity, these same prejudices and preconceptions may allow me to "pose different questions and perhaps discover different answers... that are difficult if not impossible for a [non-Sikh] to grasp empirically and formulate conceptually" (Zinn, 1979:212).

This thesis, thus, represents my offering of situated knowledge. The nature of this knowledge, gleaned from an insider approach, takes the appearance of an Edmonton Sikh youth researcher fusing her continually evolving identity with those of her Edmonton Sikh youth respondents. As a result, this study's main goal of developing an open dialogue was achieved as my status as a Sikh and moreover, as a Sikh *youth*, allowed me to create "intimate familiarity", and an atmosphere of trust with my respondents. Specifically, it is believed that Sikh youth felt more secure regarding anonymity toward a member of their own cohort and ethnic group rather than to a non-Sikh or an older member of the Sikh community. In addition, as a member of the Sikh community, it is believed that participants felt secure and confident about expressing openly their sense of Sikh identity to another Sikh who is expected to relate to what it means to be Sikh.

My status as a Sikh youth also explains why I have chosen to examine only Sikh youth (18 to 30 years) and not older age groups. While age would be a factor worth considering with respect to the "variability in the affirmation of [Sikh identity]", my status as a Sikh youth may preclude any attempt to establish an honest and revealing dialogue with older members of the Sikh community who may feel a

responsibility to "guide me in the right direction" rather than disclose their own personal thoughts and perceptions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In keeping with the ethical guidelines defined by the University of Alberta, this study ensured that the rights of human subjects were protected. Prior to interviewing, participants were provided with a complete explanation regarding the nature and purpose of the study. Voluntary participation was stressed. Participants were assured that anonymity of their responses would be maintained. In addition, if a participant felt uncomfortable about answering any question(s), he/she was encouraged to avoid such questions. In addition, participants could withdraw their consent to participate at any time.

Considering that the Sikh community has recently been in the public eye (i.e. the controversy regarding Sikhs and their right to wear turbans in the R.C.M.P and the Royal Canadian Legions), every precaution was taken to ensure participants that the results of the study would *not* serve to damage or offend the nature of Sikh identity or the Sikh community. Finally, participants were informed of the fact that the results of the study will be made available to all interested individuals. For example, a copy of the Master's thesis will be placed in the libraries of the Gurdwaras.

Informed consent was ensured by the following statement which was provided to participants verbally and in written form:

> I am seeking your voluntary assistance in a study which is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree at the

> University of Alberta. The aim of this study is to describe and explore the nature of Sikh identity and consciousness among Edmonton Sikh youth.
>
> All information provided by the participants will remain anonymous. Results of the study will NOT be used to discredit or offend the Sikh identity or Sikh community in any way. In addition, results of the study will be made available to all interested individuals.
>
> If you choose to be interviewed, please be as frank and honest as possible in giving your responses. If there is any question you feel uncomfortable about answering, please do not feel compelled to answer. You may, at any time, withdraw your consent to participate. Thank-you for your cooperation.

To ensure that anonymity is maintained, each respondent was assigned a case number. Respondents were informed that their names or any other form of identification were not required.

In addition to myself, only the members of my supervisory committee were exposed to the raw data supplied by the interviewees. During data collection and after data analysis[3] was completed, tape recordings, transcribed interviews and notes were filed in a private and secure location known only to myself. The following chapter is a presentation of the findings from the interview data which was collected over a period of four months (i.e. May 1994 to August 1994).

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[3] As data from the interviews may be used for future work at the Ph.D level, the data will not be destroyed at the completion of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

SIKH IDENTITY

1. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

In total, nineteen respondents[1] were interviewed; nine males and ten females. Three respondents are married. Specifically, there is one married couple, and another married female. The couple and the married female are the only respondents with children. Six respondents were born in Canada. The majority of respondents (13 out of 19) were born outside of Canada, either in England, Africa, or India. These respondents moved to Canada when they were either very young (i.e. nineteen months to five years) or when they were young children (i.e. seven to eleven years). Only one male respondent moved to Canada as a young adult. This respondent has been in Canada, and specifically in Edmonton, for ten years. Prior to moving to Canada, this individual lived in the United States. Respondents ranged in age from eighteen to thirty years.

2. CORPORATE IDENTITY

Punjabi Language

Many researchers consider language to be a primary factor of ethnic group identification and a primary means by which the traditions, values and the religion of an ethnic group are passed down from generation to generation. With respect to this Edmonton Sikh group, the skill is limited to speaking and understanding Punjabi. In terms of reading and writing, respondents indicated that they are either

[1] All respondents were assigned a case number. Case numbers appear in parenthesis beside the quotation provided by the respondent.

fully illiterate or are competent only at an elementary level. In contrast, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they understand most of the spoken language. Speaking proficiency is not as high. However, most respondents are able to communicate, at the very least, at an elementary level.

Based on research done on Sikhs over the past ten years (Chadney, 1984; Koehn, 1991) it appears that the primary means by which language is effectively transmitted is through the family. Thus, in terms of exploring the importance of language retention in the family and its relationship to the definition of what constitutes a Sikh (corporate identity), respondents were asked: "How important would it be for your children to learn Punjabi?". Of the respondents without children (16 out of 19), all emphasized that it would be important to teach Punjabi to their future children. In particular, these respondents emphasized how language would enable their future children to communicate with their Punjabi speaking relatives which, in turn, would ensure the continuity of cultural traditions and define the child's Sikh identity.

Male informant (19): I think it's very important to me that they have an understanding of who they are, and that includes being able to speak the language.

Female informant (4): It would be very important, because I guess it's the best way to keep your culture. Even for the future [of the kids] it's good, too. [They'll have] in-laws and relatives, and [they'll be able] to relate to everybody.

Male informant (8): I think it would be fairly important, [because] it's a question of identity. I mean they should understand where they came from. I would promote it as an academic exercise, let them discover what the culture's about, because when it's forced on you... you just don't relate to the culture, you just don't relate to the language that well. I would prefer an academic level [of understanding], then the interest generates itself.

Even an individual (respondent 7) who was not taught Punjabi by her parents feels it is important for her future children to learn:

> I think it would be very important. Like I wish my parents would have done that with me when I was younger... With my nephew I see that my brother's talking to him in Punjabi and English, so I think I'd like to do that. I think it's really important, especially toward the older members of the family, 'cause it kind of shows respect.

The three respondents who do have children also emphasized the importance of teaching Punjabi as they, too, believe that learning the language allows for the maintenance of the Sikh culture and enables communication with relatives.

The Importance of Khalistan

The struggle for a Sikh homeland, Khalistan, has been a controversial issue for Sikhs worldwide, especially since the 1984 attack in Amritsar. Since the attack has been attributed to the 1984 Indian government which was unable to reach a resolution regarding demands for greater economic and political autonomy for Punjabis and religious freedom for Sikhs, it symbolizes for pro-Khalistani Sikhs the persisting need for independence in the form of an independent Sikh state. In addition, it is thought by pro-Khalistani's that an independent Sikh homeland would strengthen the identity of Sikhs and further refine the boundaries between a Sikh and a non-Sikh. To gauge the influence of Khalistan on defining the boundaries of the Sikh identity, I asked respondents the following question: "How important is it for you to have a Sikh homeland called Khalistan? Why or why not?".

For the minority of respondents that do believe in the importance of Khalistan, the reasons focus primarily on a sense of identity and belonging. For

example, one respondent (14) emphasized the personal sense of belonging and security that a distinctively "Sikh" homeland would provide for all Sikhs. Another respondent (12) emphasized how Khalistan would provide "independence" for Sikhs and stressed that without this independence a Sikh "identity" and "honour" would not emerge. Similarly, a female respondent (7) who recognized the implication that Khalistan carries stated:

> ...it implies that there's some kind of reach in agreement ... [and an] alleviation of the conflict that's been ever-so constant between Sikhs and Hindus in India. [It means they will] stop fighting amongst each other and concentrate on... having an identity and... peace... I think... [now] the identity is not so much focused on being a Sikh, but on fighting a common enemy... If it (Khalistan) does happen... I think that [Sikhs] can focus on organizing themselves based on an identity of self, rather than on an identity of "... it's us against them"...

At the same time, however, these same respondents do not think that Khalistan is a realistic goal. Another male respondent (2) re-iterated this concern. Although he agrees that Indian Sikhs remain vulnerable to the exploits of the Indian government and that independence from the government would be desirable, he doubts that "Sikhs would be able to maintain a country" because of a lack of "political cohesiveness amongst the [Sikh] leaders of the [various Sikh] organizations". Thus, it appears that the idea of Khalistan, more than the actual realization of it, provided these respondents with a sense of belonging and further reinforced a universal sense of Sikh identity to which all Sikhs could attune themselves.

The most apparent theme regarding the importance of Khalistan emerged with those respondents who are opposed to Khalistan and believe that it is not possible, nor is it a practical solution. Although these informants recognize the

need for Indian Sikhs to be freed from religious persecution and to gain political and economic autonomy, Khalistan is not considered the answer. Similar to respondents in favor of Khalistan, many respondents who are opposed emphasized that the lack of political organization among Sikhs and Sikh leaders would never allow for the emergence of an independent Sikh state.

Male informant (9): ...once we unite together as a people, then...let's look at a country, then let's look at separation. But right now I can honestly say... we could never run a country.

This respondent also indicated that because some individuals believe in Khalistan only because they have an "urge to fight and stand up for something", a unified stand on the reasons for having Khalistan has become difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. A female respondent (1) agreed that some individuals only focus unrealistically on the militant image of a strong Jat Sikh without considering the political and economic realities of building an independent Sikh state.

> [They] don't look for the reasons [for having Khalistan]. They don't listen to anyone... It's easy enough to say "Yes, we want Khalistan"... Like if you go to India and someone goes "Ok, here's a gun, defend yourself..." like you here people say "Ok, Khalistan. I'm going to India. I'm going to [fight]"... yah, right.

Some argued that even if Khalistan were possible, a sense of Sikh identity would not be guaranteed, nor would Khalistan aid in defining the corporate boundaries which define a Sikh.

Female informant (5): These people... want a place where Sikhs can identify themselves and where they can be free, because they think they're being suppressed by the Indian government, so they want to rule themselves. But I don't think [Khalistan] will improve anything... The hatred between Hindus and Sikhs will just get worse, and also with the Indian government and the Sikhs, it will just get

worse. It's not realistic at all.

Female informant (4): I think everybody should just be together... [Khalistan] is gonna cause more of a conflict. What happens when some Hindus want to move into Khalistan. What's gonna happen then? There's always gonna be people moving back and forth.

Male informant (18): I think it's wrong. I think it will isolate us. We will be socially and economically isolated and it will bring down our standard of living. And if you go to visit Khalistan - *your homeland* - and it's worse than a third world country, then what is there to see? It doesn't create anything positive. The whole point of having Khalistan would be defeated.

Corporate Identity Definition by Individual

To explore the perceptions of the Sikh corporate identity, respondents were asked to define the boundaries of the Sikh identity and its constituent elements. This question is significant, in particular, because of the introduction of the Khalsa order (1699) which had a significant impact on Sikh identity construction. While it strengthened Sikh consciousness and more precisely defined the unique quality of the Sikh identity, it, ironically, created divisions among Sikh devotees (i.e. between Khalsa and non-Khalsa Sikhs). For example, some orthodox Khalsa Sikh groups legalized a definition of Sikh identity which recognized only baptized members of the Khalsa to be members of the Sikh community of believers. This legislation was challenged and amended several times.

The result of these efforts does not reflect a definitive answer to "What is Sikh identity?". Rather, it reflects a process by which the community has historically found itself in, that is, the process of identity construction and reconstruction.

How does this Edmonton Sikh age group evaluate the boundaries of the Sikh community? Generally, the group offered a flexible definition of who should be considered a Sikh as the majority of the respondents did not exclude, for example, those Sikhs who are not initiated into the Khalsa. The majority of respondents stated that all who claim they are Sikh should be considered Sikh. For example, informants gave the following responses:

Female informant (cut hair; wears kara) (17): As long as you believe in your heart that you are Sikh, then you are a Sikh. Doesn't matter if you have hair uncut or cut, or if you have amrit [baptismal water]. It doesn't matter to me.

Female informant (retains kes; wears kara) (1): I don't think it should make a difference. A Sikh is a Sikh.

Male informant (cut hair; observance of other Five K's is unknown) (8): Anybody who considers himself a Sikh is a Sikh.

However, a few respondents do draw a boundary between Sikh and non-Sikh. One male informant (kes-dhari) (9) stated this:

> ... It really amazes me because a lot of these people are using these things [Five K's] for fashion statements, right? And I think it's totally disrespecting everything that we believe in... I have nothing against people [Sikhs] that have cut hair... they are no less Sikh than I am. But, I do have a problem with people who say "Yah, I am Sikh", and never go to Gurdwara and don't know the first thing about Sikh history or what the Gurus are all about, go drink, go party, go smoke... I have a huge problem with that. I don't classify them as Sikhs.

In contrast, another female (11) respondent implied that Sikhs identify other Sikhs in terms of an ascribed identity rather than an achieved one:

> If you're born a Sikh, I think you can practically do anything and be a Sikh. Unless you publicly say you're changing your religion, you'll always be a Sikh. You can, in your mind, think that "I don't like this religion" or whatever, but everyone is always gonna think of you as a Sikh... until you tell everyone "I'm not gonna be a Sikh", they're always gonna see you as a Sikh.

Despite the considerable variation in responses, many respondents feel the need to emphasize that the Five K's represent a spirituality and discipline desirable to achieve. For example, one male (kes-dhari) informant (2), quoted above, feels that the Five K's "represent a very fine tuning of an end state... achieving peak performance". Another male informant (12; cut hair, wears kara) said this:

> A lot of Sikhs do really believe - even if they have cut their hair - really, really do believe... but it's just circumstances - coming to Canada and cutting their hair... But deep inside they're as pure as any baptized Sikh. But then like the Guru said, he will love his baptized Sikh more - if you're baptized you'll be close to the Guru.

In some cases, respondents find it problematic to reconcile their feelings about including those who do not practice all Five K's in the Sikh community. For example, one female (14; cut hair, wears kara) Sikh stated the following:

> I feel in this day and age and where we live that what is outside of you should not be judged. I think a true Sikh - is what is within. Uhm, because maybe circumstances need that person to cut their hair because of a job or uh, I don't know maybe he's ill or something, and cannot grow his hair - but I feel that if you are truthful, and you don't lie, don't drink, don't eat meat, whatever's written [in the Granth Sahib] and you follow it, regardless of what you look like on the outside, I feel that you are a Sikh. (PAUSE). Well, sometimes I feel like changing my answer. I think I want to change my answer. I think to be a Sikh you should practice all Five K's - to be a *true* Sikh. I don't know, I've got my foot in the door and that's it. I don't think I'm across that desert yet to be considered a full Sikh. The definition that I feel I have is a person on Earth - an earthly being who is Sikh will take the slow route. I mean you're born, you'll learn your religion... I mean it's a learning process. Because I mean you're not born with an identity, and

> bang, you know all about it from day one. But I think the ultimate - at the end of practicing everything and following it without fail becomes that divine being. [The five K's are] like a tester. You can take the Kangha and wear it in your hair, or not cut your hair, and see if you can handle that, and then go on to the next one, and see if you can handle that. And then keep going until you find the ultimate.

Similar to the respondent above, one male (19; cut hair, observance of other Five K's is unknown) visualized the concept of a true Sikh:

> I think to be a true Sikh, you can't really be a true Sikh... like they were eighty or one hundred years ago because you just live in a society as such. I think a lot of people can't because of a lot of restrictions. I mean, I think you can wear it [the Five K's] and everything... but along the line you're gonna make a mistake.

Despite this concept of an ideal Sikh, this respondent still categorizes himself as a Sikh for a reason which is similar to the one given by the female (14) quoted above:

> I'm a Sikh because I place high value on the religion. I always try as much as I can, and that's what I like about the religion - it says, it doesn't matter what you do. As long as you believe in the religion wholeheartedly, you'll be the best Sikh you can be.

Similarly, a male informant (2) said this about what constitutes a Sikh:

> "Sikh" means to learn. That means there are so many different levels of being a Sikh. I guess, what I would define as a Sikh is somebody that really wants to learn more. The ones that have though they have it all figured out, even if they have uncut hair, then really they have something more to learn. What constitutes a Sikh might be that you seem to trust the Gurus' teachings more than anybody elses.

In general, respondents' definition of what constitutes a Sikh is consistent with the "virtually unchallenged" and flexible definition offered by the *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (see chapter 2) which states that "a Sikh is any person who believes in Akal Purakh (God); in the ten Gurus;... in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, other writings

of the ten Gurus, and their teachings; in the Khalsa initiation ceremony, and who does not believe in any other system of religious doctrine" (McLeod, 1989: 95).

The responses given by interviewees not only clarified the perceived boundaries of the Sikh community, but were also insightful in terms of identifying certain cultural and religious roles of a Sikh. For example, respondents stressed that other defining features of Sikh identity include regular attendance to the gurdwara, knowing the Punjabi language and maintaining ties with the Sikh community. Though it is strongly suspected that they are practiced by the Sikh community in Edmonton, only one female (17) respondent discussed that the observance of arranged marriage, adding that Sikh food and dress are also a part of what defines the cultural roles of a Sikh.

3. PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION TO THE SIKH IDENTITY

The Importance of Maintaining Sikh Ties

Maintaining Sikh Ties in Edmonton

Several scholars indicate that "ethnocultural identity tends to be multi-dimensional, clustering around a multiplicity of factors [including one's]... choice of ingroup friends" (Lazerwitz, 1953; Geismar, 1954; Driedger, 1975, 1976). In this sample, the importance of maintaining ties with Sikhs in Edmonton was strongly emphasized. Of these respondents, the most common reasons for maintaining ties centered around promoting a sense of identity and belonging. Interestingly, the responses suggest that the male respondents believe that knowing other Sikhs provides them with a shared sense of identity.

Male informant (2): I guess it's quite important because a lot of being Sikh is part of what I am and when I associate with the other Sikhs it helps me discover a lot more about myself, and I find that I associate a lot better with people that are more alike.

Male informant (19): It allows me to express my feelings through my language, culture... I mean without that tie I guess I wouldn't be able to identify who I am, I guess.

Male informant (9): ...to stay around with your own, you finally get to know your background, your history, and you feel proud of who you are. And, thus, you have a tendency to ask more questions about your culture, and find out more about it.

Male informant (12): [It's] very important... to have an understanding of what's going on in the community, to find out what my community's doing right now - just to be close-knit with other [Sikhs], because we've got something in common, our ancestry is - uh - we have lots in common.

On the other hand, the responses suggest that maintaining ties for females provides a sense of belonging:

Female informant (17): ...it makes me feel like I belong. It makes me feel more important, like I have a past, like I have a history, like I have a future with them.

Female informant (14): I don't feel lost... I feel comfortable in our crowd.

Female informant (11): It's quite important... you...come from the same background so you understand a lot of things that a lot of other people don't understand.

These responses are consistent with Kurt Lewin's (in Driedger, 1989:141) proposal that "individual's need a firm, clear sense of identification with the heritage and culture of their ingroup to find a secure basis for a sense of well-being".

Although a major pattern suggested that maintaining ties within the community was important, some respondents suggested that the maintenance of Sikh ties may not always be desirable. In these cases, association was determined

by the character of the potential friend or group of friends.

Male informant (8): I hang out with who I hang out with. If I get along with them yah, if not I'm not going to bother... it's more a question of character.

Female informant (4): It's important to some extent because you should, I guess you have to be close to your own - I guess, to your people in your culture. But, it just depends, because I guess just through experience it's been a positive experience and it's been a negative experience, so it all depends... it doesn't matter to me. It all depends on who it is - who you're talking to.

Female informant (1): It all depends on - I mean if I go into a group [of Sikhs] where it's just an artificial kind of thing, then I don't think I'd keep in touch because it has nothing for me.

However, despite the conditions placed on friendship and association with other Sikhs, there may exist a need to express a tie to the Sikh community in general. One respondent (7) expressed this need. While she has not always experienced positive relations with the Edmonton Sikh community, she still claimed the need to express a sense of identity with Sikhs. When asked what her sense of identity was directed toward, the informant stated the following:

> I feel a sense of identity with just Sikhs in general, just not necessarily with the Sikhs here... like if I see a Sikh on T.V., it's like "Who is he?", you know? You knid of have that automatic sense of identity, and then relationship, I guess.

Maintaining Sikh Ties in India

While the importance assigned to maintaining ties with Sikhs in India was stressed less than the need to maintain Sikh ties in Edmonton, most respondents feel a need to sustain a link to India because it is considered the homeland or because relatives live there. Only three out of the nineteen participants consider that maintaining ties with Sikhs in India is not very important.

The Five K's.

The Five K's were established in a formal tradition known as the Khalsa order. The Khalsa religious order was established by the last Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, in 1699. During the time of Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs faced severe opposition and persecution. Because the survival of Sikhism was threatened, Guru Gobind Singh declared that a formal system of defense was required. The Khalsa was created and required Sikhs to defend their spiritual identity and those of others who required their identity to be defended, regardless of their faith. An initiation ceremony (Amrit-sanskar), a distinctive code of dress (Five K's) and a corresponding code of conduct was developed. The distinctive code of dress is known as the Five K's. They are: The Kaccha: a type of undershorts; The Kangha: A wooden comb; The Kara: steel bangle: Kes: Uncut hair; and the Kirpan: a sword varying in size. Since the creation of the Khalsa, the Sikh identity has most significantly been associated with the Khalsa Sikh in terms of shaping the boundary of what constitutes a Sikh, and in terms of an defining an individual

sense of Sikh identity. Thus, I considered it essential to ask respondents about their position on the five K's and how it relates to their expression of Sikh identity. Specifically, I asked respondents: "How important do you think it is to practice the Five K's?" How important do you think it is for Sikhs to practice the Five K's? Do you value the worth of the Five K's?".

A definite pattern emerged which suggested that the Five K's does play a role in the definition of a Sikh, both at a personal and corporate level. All but one of the respondents declared their respect for the spiritual significance of the Five K's and affirmed the value of becoming an Amrit-dhari Sikh. In addition, in some cases, the choice to practice the Five K's had been consciously evaluated in terms of one's life circumstances and personal sense of identity and spirituality. For example, one female informant (6), who practices two of the Five K's (uncut hair and a steel bangle), rationalized her choice to remain so in this way:

> I wear a Kara [steel bangle] at this time in my life. Maybe later on in my life I'll feel [the Five K's] are more important. When I'm more secure, you know, financially and so on, I can be more concerned with my personal development.

Essentially, this informant, while valuing the spiritual significance of the Five K's, feels that she has to negotiate the value of her spiritual development with the more immediate economic and social concerns in her life, such as securing employment in her area of specialization and having a family.

Another male informant (2) who has uncut hair regards the practice of the Five K's as an indication of spiritual growth and enlightenment. For him, practicing the Five K's translates into an intimate understanding of one's spiritual

development, not merely an expression of religious tradition. When asked how important it is for him to practice all Five K's he responded in this way:

> I will practice all Five K's eventually. I know that my father didn't choose to wear the fifth K until just recently. And it was very important to him to know for sure that he could make the commitment, because when you take it that seriously, they're not just symbols anymore, they're a part of you and you want to be sure you understand what they represent. The symbolization [of the Five K's] is a very fine tuning where you have to interact with everybody in the society to perform well. And one of those things to achieve peak performance is if you can keep an identity that another person wouldn't dare to touch. So, those Five K's really represent very fine tuning of an end state. I have to become a little stronger first before I practice the Five K's...

A similar attitude regarding the function of the Five K's was expressed by a female informant (7) who wears one of the Five K's - the kara:

> Regardless if you have one or if you have five, I mean each of them provides you with a spirituality, like that sense of spirituality. It kind of reaffirms it, I think, not so much provides you with it... I wear a Kara, and I look at it sometimes, and it kind of reaffirms what I feel about myself, and kind of reminds me sometimes, if I like forget who I am... [But] I want to have that choice. I don't want it to be forced upon me. Like I see girls, who, you know, ... they've got all the Five K's down man, but they're so unhappy and they resent them (parents) for it, and I kind of think it loses it's worth. I mean, you know, it can be there, but if you don't have the spirituality to begin with, you're never gonna have it.

In contrast, while recognizing the maturity required to fully commit to and appreciate the significance of the Five K's, a male informant emphasized the importance of practicing the Five K's (9) starting at an early age:

> ... the real test is when [you're] younger, if you can keep it then. A gentleman in my religion put it to me, he goes, "Once you're on that track, you may not know what you're doing it for, but sooner or later you're gonna come across the point where you're gonna ask and you will find out. And you may fall off that track once in awhile, but you'll get on that track. But it's getting in that general direction, and it's gonna eventually get to its destination one way or another. Right? Whether it's really slow or you whiz by, it's gonna get there one way or another.

One female respondent (1) who had experienced parental pressure to keep her hair uncut found that as she has grown older she has begun to appreciate the significance of the Five K's:

> It's very important for me [now] because it's who I am. Before I resented it because of what my parents said. They said when you get married, [then] cut your hair. There'd be like hell to pay if I cut my hair. [But] now I think it's more [because] I like it. A lot of it is for my inner peace.

While affirming the value of the Five Ks, there was an indication, however, of some respondents who do not find that it is important to practice them at present or, for some respondents, in the future. For example, one male respondent (8) stated:

> I don't think it's that important. I have my faith... I don't see any changes in the future. But I mean anybody here [in Canada] who's willing to stick to those things [Five K's], I mean that takes a lot of courage to do that sort of thing. [But] faith also develops from, like I say, academic interest. Once you sort things out and you know you can be more sure what you're learning is true. Faith comes from that.

Another female informant (11) discussed how certain members of the community contribute to discouraging the practice of the Five K's:

> If you're wearing them and you don't even understand what you're doing that's bad - bad for other people because some people might feel bad that "Well, I'm not doing it". There's a stereotype with people who have cut hair... especially if it's a girl... A girl with cut hair, she probably doesn't know how to speak the language, probably goes out drinking, you know... You know, she probably doesn't study very hard, and goes out with boys all the time. You know, it's a total stereotype by the older generation. And - and some of the younger generation might think that way, too. It just, you know, it makes you want to stay away from the Five K's completely, because I just think it's such a - you know, it has nothing to do with the religion anymore. It has become a community thing.

A couple of respondents commented on the impact of the 1984 Sikh massacre on their attitude towards practicing the Five K's:

Male respondent (2) (uncut hair; wears kara): I remember when I was a child, I always used to think that I'll probably start wearing a turban when I was a little older, perhaps when I started university or something like that. It had always been something I wanted to do. When the 1984 crisis came, well I was 15 years old, and there was a lot of emotion stirring up, and all of a sudden it seemed a lot more urgent to start doing something now... [The attack] made [practicing the Five Ks'] more immediate. I just decided instead of putting it off for a few years, I'd do it right now. I'm definitely glad that I did.

Male respondent (12) (cut hair; wears kara): I value the worth of [the Five K's]. That's what our Guru gave us - that's what identifies us to our religion... If you're a Sikh and you follow Sikhism, I think if you don't do this [the Five K's] you're not that disciplined and that tells you something. I've always felt this way. Because of what happened, it's maybe stronger now, [and I think] that maybe I should be this - you know baptized.

Self-Identification

In terms of self-identification, all but two respondents expressed that they value the worth of the Sikh doctrine created by all ten Gurus. In addition, all but one respondent identify themselves as Sikh. The one respondent (18) who does not categorize himself as a Sikh was born into the Sikh faith, and brought up as a Sikh, but claimed that, at present, he does "not value the teachings of the Sikh

religion".

The terms of Sikh self-identification varied for every individual:

Female informant (cut hair) (5): I want to identify myself with some religion, and if I'm born Sikh I am Sikh. There's always a place for it. You don't always have time for it, and I'm not gonna follow everything the Gurus said... but I want to be with my Gurus... I want to identify myself with something, and since I was born Sikh, I choose Sikhism.

Female informant (cut hair, wears kara) (17): I think its important to practice the Five K's, but I think if you go without them that does not mean you are not a good Sikh. For me, personally I don't [practice the Five k's]... [but] I do believe in the whole doctrine that's created by all ten Gurus. Being a Sikh is very important to me. Whenever I have people asking questions about Sikhism, I am delighted to answer them, and I very much like to promote the culture, the religion, everything about it.

Female informant (cut hair, wears kara) (7): Even if you don't understand what all the Gurus said, or you don't understand all their teachings, I mean, ok, understanding can come later, but first you have to have that... initial kind of understanding and I think relationship with God... then everything else is gonna fall into place. You kind of take what they [the Gurus] said into account and you may not understand it all, but I just think that if you use that [Guru's teachings] to kind of make a relationship with God, then... understanding will fall into place after. I have a strong relationship with God, and God plays a really big part in my life...

Male informant (cut hair, observance of other Five K's is unknown) (8): When you travel, the whole thing [sense of identity] moves from abstract to concrete... Before [I saw myself] as something abstract... in Canada... your identity here is abstract. You can't relate to a lot of things [about the Sikh culture] because you're grown up here. But when you go there [Asia]... everything becomes concrete... you see yourself in a context, you belong to these people. As you're moving through Punjab and out of Punjab you see that people around - they know what Sikhs are.

Male informant (kes-dhari) (9): All of the Gurus had something to give. All of them in one way or another affected what we are today and who we are today. It's [the Sikh religion] a well-oiled machine. I make a point to let all my friends know the basis of my religion. Basically, they know what I stand for. They know I don't eat meat, then know I won't do this, I won't do that... I believe that the Five K's are very important to a certain degree. I think Gurdwara [attendance] is very important. I can't stress it enough.

Male informant (cut hair, observance of other Five K's is unknown) (19): I see myself as a person I suppose who believes in all - like I believe in the religion and everything - I don't practice it if you [mean] the five instruments [Five K's] because of who I am, because I am growing up in sort of a Canadian sort of way, and uh, I haven't really had parents who were avid Sikhs... I think I'm Sikh because my parents are Sikh, and I think also I'm Sikh because I place high value on the religion. I always try as much as I can... I guess if you categorize and say A) Sikh; B) Sikh; and C) Sikh, I'd be one of them that wouldn't practice [the five K's] but believed in the religion and everything like that.

Male informant (cut hair, wears kara) (12): I can see myself becoming baptized - like, uh, going on that path eventually... I believe in all the Gurus... Guru Nanak told us there is one God. That's what I believe in.

4. PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE IDENTITY

Caste Affiliation and Perceived Importance

The caste system is a rigid system of stratification which assigns individuals a particular social, religious, political and occupational status. Within the Sikh doctrine, caste identification is discouraged. All Sikhs, regardless of caste, are to be considered equal in the spiritual and secular domains. However, due to the entrenched nature of the caste system, Sikhs have not been completely successful in avoiding its influence. In order to determine the extent to which caste identification exists and how it is associated with the individual and corporate sense of Sikh identity, I asked the following question: "How important is it for you to identify yourself with a caste?".

In keeping with the Sikh philosophy, most respondents emphasized that it should not serve to enhance discrimination or contradict the Sikh philosophy of equality. As one male informant (19) stated:

> If you're a Jat (agrarian caste), I don't care, as long as you treat me with the same respect. I don't want the discrimination.

The majority of respondents tend to view caste in this way. That is, respondents expressed how caste identification creates "conflict", "segregation", and "discrimination".

The caste system does play a role, however, in the Edmonton Sikh community.

According to one male informant (2):

I think a lot of them [Sikhs] know they're not supposed to because it's something so obvious in Sikhism. It's an event in Sikhism that hardly any Sikh couldn't know about - the Vaisakhi, where [Guru Gobind Singh] said every caste is all the same. We're all Singhs. Yet it's practiced by all Sikhs.

Informants' reasons for the persistence of the caste system varied. A minority of the respondents who feel caste observance is somewhat important to maintain gave the following reasons:

One male informant (19) commented on the relationship between caste and identity.

> I'm a Rajput. I know a lot of Rajput's out there and their thinking is very similar...[Caste is] important because you're maintaining certain cultural traditions for yourself. It's important to maintain because it's who I am, right?

Another female informant (17) emphasized the importance of caste because of its relationship with family:

> People who are of your caste are not always, but most often, related. It is interesting to see how your caste evolved since its your family. You feel a personal connection, a sense of belonging.

Of those opposed to the practice of caste, one female informant (14) stated this as an explanation for why the system persists:

> The tradition is so hard to get rid of in the sense that it's brought down from generation to generation. I mean your parents' parents did it, your parents have done it. Maybe the younger ones who sort of understand what's been written in the Granth Sahib [will] basically take a good hard look at it and say "Hmm, this is something that we should address right now and change...we should make a stand on it right now and question, why, why do you have this?

The relationship between marriage and caste, particularly caste endogamy, appeared several times when discussing the social inhibitions which caste may create. For example, when commenting on the future of her female children, one female informant (11) claimed that when her children were of marrying age, their one set of grandparents would "definitely have something to say about" their mate choices in terms of caste affiliation. While this did not please her, the informant recognizes that people do discriminate on the basis of caste, and therefore, she feels it is important for her children to avoid these types of individuals. If this means observing caste distinctions herself then, she claimed, she would do so, only to protect her children.

Other informants, however, are not as opposed to the idea that their family is intent on staying within caste boundaries. When asked if caste would be a consideration for marriage by her parents, one female informant (7) said that it would be, but added this:

> I don't mind. I could never do anything without their... acceptance. I could never go against them because they're too important to me. They helped make me who I am.

Another informant (1) feels that even if her parents were opposed to marrying outside of her caste, a negotiation with them would be possible if she became

involved with someone outside her caste. When asked when she would be concerned with asking a person what caste they are she stated:

> I suppose if I got involved with somebody. But see it all depends... I don't think my parents would put up too much of a fuss. There'd be an uproar, but - I already have a cousin married to [someone outside their caste]. They've already been through the blows.

Overall, it is suggested that caste identification exists for the reason that it may provide a sense of belonging and identity. Specifically, respondents who identified with a caste spoke of the cultural traditions and sense of family history which caste provides. What these cultural traditions are and whether they are considered to be associated with a religious definition of Sikh identity is another issue and was not discussed in great detail by respondents. Despite a "cultural" affiliation to caste, respondents generally agree that it is incompatible with the Sikh philosophy of an egalitarian society. Specifically, there was no indication to suggest that discrimination or a feeling of superiority is associated with the identification to any particular caste. The vast majority of the sample discourages caste affiliation if it creates segregation and discrimination, especially for Sikh females. Therefore, at least religiously, this sample suggests that caste is not to be associated with the identity of a Sikh.

SIKH CONSCIOUSNESS

The second dimension of ethnicity that is explored is ethnic consciousness. For the purposes of this study, ethnic consciousness is defined as the nature of awareness an Edmonton Sikh has of the present state of the Edmonton Sikh community and the Sikh community internationally. In this section I explore the

original research question which asks: "In what way do ethnic group members construct a sense of ethnic consciousness during the period of a pivotal event in the ethnic community?" With respect to Sikh youth I ask, "Which sources have Edmonton Sikh youth drawn upon to develop their sense of Sikh consciousness, particularly in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises?" It was thought that by asking this question respondents would lend insight into the sources which have influenced how a Sikh has developed his/her sense of identity in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises. Specifically, I asked respondents to comment on the influence of three main areas - the media, organizational and informal involvement with the Sikh community, and political and social awareness and perceptions.

1. THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

Sikh Television Programs

The Shaw cable company and Vision T.V. offer several Sikh related programs every weekend. In this section, respondents were asked, "Would you say you watch Sikh television programs regularly, occasionally, rarely or never? Why?". The majority of respondents watch these programs either occasionally or rarely. Only a small minority watch Sikh programs regularly and, on the opposite extreme, never.

The reasons varied for those who watch Sikh programs regularly to occasionally. One female informant avoids the Sikh programs which are religious-based primarily because of her inability to fully comprehend Punjabi. However, this respondent will watch cultural Sikh related television programs occasionally

because she enjoys viewing the cultural songs, dances and dress and does not feel the need to understand the Punjabi commentary.

Two other informants watch Sikh programs occasionally to regularly because the programs are considered informative and "inspiring".

Female informant (1): It's kind of nice [watching the programs]. You actually learn something. And when [I] hear other people talk about something, you don't want to be sitting there going "Hm. Really? I didn't know that."

Male informant (2): I find them actually kind of inspiring, especially with the music... and the documentaries on the Gurus. They do have some good documentaries.

Respondents' reasons for watching Sikh programs rarely or never focus primarily on opportunity and/or priorities.

Female informant (17): There's not enough time in the day, and it's [watching programs] not too important.

Male informant (12): I sleep or I'm shopping and I miss them. Too busy.

Male informant (19): To be honest, when I get an opportunity to watch T.V.... I never run into "Image India", I never run into any Sikh T.V. programs. So I can't really say I don't watch them. The few times I did, I have sat there and watched them.

Female informant (14): I'm too busy during the day. I mean I got kids and everything. I would love to watch them regularly because I think they're really informative. The religious shows really sort of help me. They sort of give me peace.

Sikh Publications

Sikh publications include any type of written document relating to Sikh affairs, such as magazines, books, newspaper articles, and academic periodicals. Respondents were asked, "Would you say you read Sikh publications regularly, occasionally, rarely or never? Why?". The time spent reading Sikh publications

varied greatly among the respondents. Specifically, Sikh publications are read regularly by only a small minority. Most respondents did not read Sikh publications often.

Of those who read Sikh publications regularly, one male respondent (8) takes an active interest in seeking out academic Sikh literature and is in the process of compiling a personal collection of academic publications. Active and/or directed searches, however, do not occur for those respondents who read Sikh related material occasionally:

Female informant (1): The stuff [literature] in Rutherford [library] I've read. If something catches my eye [there] I'll flip through it. Or if somebody gives you something [from the library], [I'll read it].

Male informant (19): There's [one] named "India Today" or something like that. And I read that all the time. And if it talks about Punjab and the Sikhs, I'm always interested in that because I like to know what's happening. But how often, like I mean I don't get it in them mail, like it's just a matter of chance. If it comes my way, and it says something about Sikhs, I'd read it.

Female informant (4): The ones in English,... [on] the history of our religion... if I can get my hands on some - if say, somebody presents something, sure I'll read it, but I won't go out of my way to get some.

The majority of the respondents who rarely or never read Sikh publications do so because of an inability to read documents written in Punjabi or because of a lack of time. Some respondents stated that if there were more Sikh documents written in English and readily available, they would read them, and then only if they had the time to do so.

Female informant (17): If the Sikh publication's in English, then I can read it, which is rarely.

Female informant (14): It's the [lack of] time. And usually the ones [literature] that are really informative are written in the Punjabi language, so I can't read that, so... If my husband brings something home that's in English then I'll sort of glance through it, if it catches my eye..

Male informant (2): When I was younger I used to read them [Sikh literature] a lot more. I guess just being a student, reading almost anything other than your own studies is not really high on your list.

Sources of Information Regarding Indian Sikh Affairs

With respect to knowledge of Indian Sikh affairs, respondents were asked the following: "Which sources have informed you of the political, governmental, and religious affairs of Sikhs in India?". In response, the majority of informants stated that friends (particularly, friends who visited India) and parents are the most influential sources of information. The second most influential source for respondents is the media (specifically, the national or local news on television and in newspapers). Lectures given at gurdwaras and personal correspondence (i.e. letters and phone calls from relatives in India) and publications are considered valuable sources of information as well, however, they are considered less influential than friends, parents and the media.

Male informant (9): I would [receive information] through the national on T.V., some of the paper, or what friends would say. [My] parents went twice... maybe three times. And, [my] brothers went twice. Yah, through them I found out about it more... When they initially came back before the [1984 attack], there was a struggle going on - it wasn't so widely known at that time. They [family] told me about what the situation was and what they were fighting for. So, if I was to say, it probably would be the people that had gone for visits, they were probably the most influential.

Female informant (1): Friends, I'd say a lot - especially friends who have come from there [India] who are here. For me I'd say it's [friend's name]. [Friend's name] has lived through it... When you hear it from a friend, you think "Wait a minute, you got something there".

Female informant (11): I would say probably friends that have come back from India or relatives - that's the way I really know personally.

Male informant (2): First it was what I would read [books and newspapers]. And now it has become friends - people that have been in India and that know what has happened... they've pointed out the things that I've read... and they've added a little bit more facts to it... and I kind of have to put both together and see what one bias is and the other bias is. Usually you can come up with some reasonable facts about what most probably happened.

Some respondents reported personally visited India in the period since 1984, and three respondents claimed to heavily rely on their personal interpretation of the situation regarding Indian Sikh affairs.

Male informant (19): Personal experience I would say most strongly affected me... directly seeing something and the events that occur... the second valid would be friends [and family], the people that I've talked to. I suppose if I hadn't been to India and I had limited friends here, I'd have to say through newspapers and stuff like that.

Male informant (8): Myself. I was there to see it for myself... just talking to other people who've been oppressed by the Indian government, things like that. You see the factors of commonality.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL AND INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SIKH COMMUNITY

Type of Community Involvement

With respect to their involvement in Sikh related activities, respondents were asked "What would you say is the major Sikh activity you are most actively involved in?". The majority of respondents indicated that they are involved more in informal activities rather than formal Sikh organizations. The main forms of informal activities that respondents are involved in are social activities such as

attending bhangra[2] parties and informal gatherings (i.e. house parties, barbecues), and cultural activities. The most frequently mentioned cultural activity is the Vaisakhi cultural/religious program held annually at the Edmonton Jubilee Auditorium. Interest in religious activities and formal organizations appear not to be popular forms of community involvement.

In terms of the impact of the Sikh crises on Sikh related activities, the responses varied. Some respondents indicated that they do not perceive a relationship between the crises events and their involvement with the Sikh community. For example, one male informant stated this:

Male informant (9): It [Sikh related activities] was something within myself that I believed in [doing]. I don't think that [Sikh crises] had too much bearing on it.

Female informant (5): It's because of my age [that I'm doing more now].

Other respondents do perceive an impact - either directly or indirectly. One male informant (12) stated that he has become more involved in the Sikh community recently because he "[wants] to make sure [he isn't] losing [his] heritage.". In particular, the events that preceded the pivotal 1984 crisis caused the concern that he might be "losing his heritage".

> Before 1984 I felt we were losing our Sikhism, because everybody in India, you know, they were cutting their hair], the kids, you know - Uh, smoking, watching Hindi movies - feeling like Hindu things were better. I have to do this [participate in Sikh activities] to prove to people that we are a strong community.

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[2]The Bhangra is a form of Punjabi cultural dance and music. The contemporary form of bhangra music combines the traditional bhangra lyrics and tunes with a contemporary "westernized" beat and tempo. Over the last few years, the "bhangra" party has become a popular form of cultural expression and solidarity for Canadian Sikh youth.

Another female informant (4) perceives an indirect impact of the Sikh crises events.

> For myself it really didn't make a difference. But I guess because other people are - have been affected by it... to a higher degree than I have, I guess they've influenced me to get involved. I guess indirectly I am affected.

Gurdwara Attendance

According to James Chadney (1984:142), the gurdwara acts as "the center of the [Vancouver Sikh] community's source of solidarity, and [therefore] must be seen as playing a major role in ethnic boundary maintenance". What purpose does the gurdwara appear to serve for Sikh youth in Edmonton? When asked "About how often do you attend Gurdwara and why?", the majority of the respondents interviewed said that they attend Gurdwara occasionally and then only for weddings, Sikh celebrations (i.e. Guru's birthdays) or if their parents are holding a special ceremony, such as a *gurpurb*[3]. In the case of a family function, the respondents feel a responsibility to help out (sometimes referred to as *sewa* - community service). One male informant (8) said this:

> [When I was younger] it wasn't voluntary. Now, I'm going voluntarily. I went last weekend. I'm just doing a kind of service for my parents. I don't mind doing this.

Other respondents do not attend Gurdwara for other reasons besides the fact that they simply do not want to. That is, there are respondents who expressed a desire to attend but find it difficult because of other demands being made on their time.

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[3] According to Cole & Sambhi, (1993:134), "a *gurpurb* is the continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib which is timed to commence about forty-eight hours before the *gurpurb* is celebrated. After this reading, there [are] lectures or homilies on the teachings and achievements of the Guru".

For example, in separate interviews, a young married couple both stated that their attendance patterns have dropped dramatically since their marriage and the birth of their children.

Another male informant (2) who does not attend Gurdwara because of school and work said this:

> If I do get a full time job [with regular hours] soon [then] I'll start attending more regularly.

A female informant (7) who does not attend regularly because of school stated this about her desire to attend Gurdwara:

> Well I just think that like it's more for my own self. I think it's really important to kind of, I mean, in all my selfishness and stuff that happens, you just kind of want to take a day to kind of reflect and kind of be at one with God, I guess. I just feel that when I go to Gurdwara it provides me the time and the kind of place to reflect...

3. AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SIKH AFFAIRS

Political and Religious Awareness of the Sikh Community

When respondents were asked "How regularly do you follow the political, governmental and/or religious affairs of Sikhs?", the majority of respondents indicated that they make a point to follow to major Sikh issues, such as the controversy over allowing turbaned Sikhs to enter a Royal Canadian Legion hall, or major issues regarding the conflict with Sikhs in India.

Female informant (5): The recent turban issue with the Legion, I'm interested in that. Like, I remember when they were - it was - like they'd just taken the vote, and they hadn't tallied it yet. I was very interested in finding out what they thought, what the verdict was.

Female informant (11): Whatever comes into the media, if it's something major, I'll read it. It's only if it's something in the news about Sikhs... but otherwise I mean I

don't know what's going on everyday in India.

Male informant (19): If I see something, uh, that relates to Sikhs, I will always read that - if it's in the Journal [Edmonton Journal] and said Sikhs did this, the Indian government did this, I'm always flipping to that page.

Female informant (14): I think it's important to follow them [Sikh affairs]. Again, I don't really try to pursue it. If it happens in the news or if somebody's talking about it, I'll listen to it.

Some respondents indicated the reasons why they do not actively seek out information regarding Sikh issues.

Female informant (17): I find it too depressing that I can't do anything about it, of what's going on in India. And if I hear about it, I get more depressed.

Female informant (5): If it's some discriminatory act against Sikhs, then I'll follow it. But, you know, I don't really, I'm getting bored of hearing [about] all the turmoil that's going on in India. It just keeps going on and on.

Male informant (2): Well I have had a few people that I know that have given me a lot of information over the past few months about what's happening there [in India]. And I have tried to get all the information that I could from these sources. [But] I don't really make it a point. Like I don't think I go actively, uh, and try to understand it that much. Uh, it interests me quite a bit, and when I do have the chance I do try to figure out what's happening, but it's not something that concerns me right now. I think I came to the conclusion a little while ago that it's a lot more important to improve yourself first and then try to worry about everybody else.

A minority of the respondents did, however, indicate more of an active interest in Sikh affairs. Their interest lies in both Canadian Sikh issues and Sikh affairs worldwide, particularly the affairs of Sikhs in India. Interestingly, the respondents who follow Sikh affairs regularly are all male.

Male informant (12): I'm up-to-date with what's happening.

[Lamba]: Why is it important to you?

Male informant: Well, because they're my people. It's just a bond I have with Punjabi people... especially when they're out of India I feel that they're more

alienated so... like if there's anyway I can support them, if I read about it, I'll know what's happening, so if there's something I can do, I'll do [it]. Like if there's any kind of discrimination against Sikhs, if there's like a poll and they need signatures, even financial help or help I could do personally.

Another male informant (9) stated that while he is actively pursuing information regarding Sikh issues, he concentrates primarily on the religious affairs of Sikhs, and avoids the political issues.

> I think probably the religious aspect of it I follow quite a bit. As far as the political part of it, I don't follow it.

Perceived Violence between Indian Sikhs and the Indian Government

Based on personal sources of information regarding Sikh affairs in India, respondents were asked "How much violence do you think still exists between Sikhs and the Indian government?". The responses varied considerably. Approximately a third of the respondents believe that severe acts of violence are still occurring as a result of the Sikh/Indian government conflict. For example, based on information provided primarily by the Gurdwara, one female informant (17) stated:

> I think there's a lot of violence especially toward the smaller communities where they don't have any defense.

Another female informant (7), who bases her perception of violent episodes in India primarily on her parents' informed knowledge of Sikh affairs and her brother's visit to India, stated this:

> I think there's always been some kind of animosity between... especially the Hindus and Sikhs... and well basically it's a Hindu dominated government pretty much today and there's always gonna be a lot of violence. I mean regardless whether you hear about it or not, it's always gonna be there. It's something that I think is one constant, you know? ... my brother just got back from India and he's just telling me - not just so much like [fighting between] government and Sikhs or whatever, it's like I mean people against people. There's a lot of fighting... and there's a lot of hostility I think that's kind of below the surface.

On the other extreme, another group of respondents (8 out of 19) believe that the violence has subsided considerably since the early years of the Sikh crises - that is, the attack in Amritsar, the assassination of Indira Ghandi, and the riots immediately following these violent episodes. One male informant (2) who bases his information primarily on friends who visit India and those who live there stated:

> It is actually calmed down so much just in the past few months... it really looks like it's changing quite a bit. Whereas there used to be very strict curfews, those types of things have been relaxed a little more... What I feel is going on there right now is that people are saying "Ok, enough of this."...During that period... in the state of emergency, it almost [made] the underground thrive, smugglers thrive, and basically the entire society [went] down the drain... so now the people have just said "Ok, let's start rebuilding our state.".

Another male informant (8) who recently visited Amritsar shared a similar view:

> ... actually a lot of people are glad the militancy is gone - the militants just went out of hand... and I have no doubt that the Indian government just like were involved in some of that... it's now completely safe just about. I mean Amritsar - you couldn't even go in the streets after six or seven. That's how bad it was. Now things are safe. No kidnappings, or, uh, no drive-by's, things like that.

Based primarily on information received from publications and relatives, another male informant (12) stated:

> There is some [violence], there is some... mostly if there's trouble with the minister, the government officials, you know things like that... There's pockets of it. It's not really terror, and Khalistan or whatever, it's just disputes.

Skeptical of the information they had, three respondents remain unsure of the degree of violence that exists.

Female informant (11): Now it's hard to believe what is happening because some people will say that there's no problems. In those days [during the peak of the crises] I think there was a curfew. ... now you don't know if you're getting the right information from the Indian government. From what I've heard, and only from what I've heard [from friends and relatives], I'd say [the violence] is minor. There's not a lot of clashes anymore, but there's probably a few here and there.

Male informant (19): I have no idea. Like how do I say how much violence exists there? I mean, like a year ago... I read in the paper, the top of the militant group guy was killed and half the army was killed, like all the Sikh militants were just wiped out. Then, I'll talk to somebody else, and they'll say "Yah, it's still - yah, there's still something happening". But my general impression is that it's died down quite a bit from what it was from '84. I think it's already reached it's peak and it's going down. Unless something else happens - it's almost like it's levelled off - nothing too great.

Male informant (9): It [the violence] still does exist. I - I really couldn't judge and I really couldn't say how much it really does exist because I know, uh, they do, like in some of these papers that I've seen or - you've seen what the torture techniques that they've used on these people. And, uh, I think you can't totally ignore it because it does exist. But, to the degree, I don't really know. With that I would be - foolish of me to say... I still think that Sikhs are getting the short end of the stick immensely.

Perceived Conflict between Indian Sikhs and the Indian Government

With respect to the Sikh/Indian government conflict, respondents were asked, "Do you think that conflict still exists between Sikh and the Indian government?" Regardless of the perceived degree of violence, all respondents

believe that the conflict remains unresolved.

Male informant (2): There's always going to be some conflict, uhm, simply because we do have different life practices than the rest of the people in India... and uh, when the majority of the people are very different around you then, obviously politically, it's going to be very hard.

Male informant (9): The conflict is always going to be there. I feel that, uh, I think in any - if you look at history, in any great movement... there's always been violence and then there's always been the political aspect of it. And I think... both of them creates change. And I think in this case there was nothing political. There was no non-violent kind of thing. There was only violence that was happening... you look at the movement of blacks in America. I mean on one side they had Martin Luther King, and on the other side they had Malcolm X. And I think it was the combination of both - because I think you have to have violence to get the world's attention, that we're serious. But then you have to have the political push on the other side pressuring the government. I think the combination of both brings change. I don't think they [Sikhs] have that - the political aspect of it.

Generally, respondents view the conflict between Sikhs worldwide and the Indian government as being grounded in a complex web of political, economic and religious issues. One female informant (7) stated:

> I think a lot of it started with economic disparity and stuff, that kind of triggered it, but then that kind of brought up the religious and political conflicts that were kind of like hidden, do you know what I mean? It kind of like reinfected old wounds.

Furthermore, some respondents believe that given the appropriate trigger, the conflict might once again express itself as violently as it did in 1984.

Male informant (9): I think that [the conflict] will always stay there. I think, uh, like a lot of people think the movement's dead or whatever, but I believe that it's only a matter of time, before you find somebody else who will start it again. I think it's totally a matter of time... until [the conflict] is addressed and Sikhs are satisfied in one way, it will always be the same.

Female informant (5): I don't think it's as bad as it was in 1984, but I think it's just subsided and it's still there and it's just waiting for another - something to, you know, make it explode again.

Male informant (19): It hasn't been resolved yet. [And] I think there is something there that can always cause [the violence]... all they have to do is go kill somebody of importance... that's all it's gonna take. And there are people out there... who'd do that without even thinking twice. So, obviously there is that spark...

Other respondents spoke of how the conflict between Indian Sikhs and the Indian government has become the struggle for Sikhs worldwide.

Male informant (8): The fight is moved... the struggle's moved overseas, the ideas have not changed. Everybody still wants some kind of autonomy.

Male informant (12): Well, if you talk to a lot of the business men [in India], they say well, things are normal we're doing better, business has picked up, land prices have gone through the roof. People are making money. [But] they're still being denied electricity and water rights, 24 hours a day, which was their demands but - and they don't have religious freedom - like they are being suppressed in that way. But the fight for it [their rights] is not as strong because the people that are willing to fight are probably all dead... It's [the struggle] over [in India]... but outside of India it's still the same. People [outside of India] still talk a lot [about Sikh rights] in gurdwara. They [Indian Sikhs] are quite surprised, I think, that there is still a movement that's strong outside India, and, uh, they say, uh, "Oh things are pretty normal now", but I don't think they realize that what they fought for, they lost.

Perceived Effectiveness of Sikh Organizations

In an attempt to address how Sikh issues are being resolved, respondents were asked to judge the effectiveness of international Sikh organizations, particularly those based outside of India, which are aimed at, among other things, securing the welfare of the Sikh community internationally. Specifically, respondents were asked, "How effective do you think international organizations, such as the World Sikh Organization or the International Sikh Youth Federation, are in resolving the conflict between the Indian government and the Sikhs?". Two major themes emerged from the responses. Over half of the respondents believe that international Sikh organizations are not very effective or not at all effective in

resolving the concerns of Sikhs, the autonomy issue of Indian Sikhs, in particular.

Female informant (4): I think their mandate is to resolve all the conflicts in India. I don't know how, just to send money or help out. But it doesn't really sound like anything's being done. It's just sitting there. I think to actually make progress, they [the organizations] have to actually compromise and actually talk about things [with the Indian government]. And I think they're just going about it in a traditional way, aggressive... I don't know, I guess just maybe dominating, we want this, we want this, you know?... [There] should be compromise.

Female informant (5): I think the Sikh organizations are there to get what they want and not really come to a compromise. I'm sure [Indian Sikhs] want to come to a compromise from what I hear about with, you know, what [a relative from India] talks about.

Male informant (12): Well, I admire what they're doing... they're still keeping up the movement, but, uh, they don't really do much besides talk... the people that really did everything were in India, and uh, they were the ones that would make a difference. I don't see how these organizations can make a difference. They don't have the equipment, they don't have any approach to meet an Indian official or UN official. I mean, people might read about it in the United Nations, but they really don't have any approach to do anything.

Male informant (2): ... it's a little bit discouraging in that a lot of the Canadian Sikh organizations seem to focus on what's happening in India even though they really have no impact at all, and uh, it seems to be more of an emotional battle than anything else. I don't think they had anything to do really with any type of agreement that... the Sikhs have had in India.. I think they spent a lot of money and a lot of time on an emotional battle... We [the Sikh community] really had no foresight in what we were doing... Some would think that the lobbying of some of the governments in the Western world [U.S. and Canadian] would help, but logically, there's no amount of lobbying you could do to help that small of a population in that type of a country, especially if that country is an ally with the rest of the western world... Like I don't exactly know all their mandates. So, it would be unfair to say they're not doing anything at all. Uhm, but, from what I've seen, the majority of their time and effort is spent on external affairs, and I haven't heard of any funds that were spent on... volunteer organizations in Edmonton at all. As far as fundraising for the foodbank, that's always done by individual Gurdwaras. You'd think that organizations with that kind of power could help the other people, especially if our motto of the Sikh army is to help those - those other people that ask.

The desire expressed to reserve judgement on the effectiveness of organizations was the second major theme which emerged. This group admitted that they are not fully aware of the goals and resulting efforts of Sikh organizations.

Female informant (1): These groups, I have no idea because you hear about it, but you don't hear what they do... You don't hear like W.S.O. [World Sikh Organization], this is their annual report. There's nothing there... When you hear about this "Oh, we don't have enough money raised for people over there [in India]". But when you have functions [in respondents community] there's always enough money. I'm wondering... why is there so much poverty [with Sikhs in India]? There's ghettos of just the survivors [in India] and a lot of the kids are taking drugs - LSDs - and when they were questioned they said because they saw their father being burnt.

Female informant (11): I really don't know. I don't know what they're doing and I don't know what their results have been. I haven't heard anything about - I've heard some bad things about some - you know, they're not funding - or they're not using the money wisely -but I guess you get that with any organization. But I haven't heard a lot, like what they're doing or what they're plans are, if they've got some kind of long term plan. But I think I don't know that because I haven't really tried.

Female informant (14): Right now I can't answer that question because I feel that, the way I am, I don't take an active part in [it], nor do I know what's happening in India... whatever sort of business they do here, I really can't see what's happening over there [in India], if there is any improvement.. I guess they must be helping them in some way. But again, I'm not there on the other side to say, hey is this helping you, or how do you feel about it? The few incidents that happened in Gurdwara, they're very head strong and there's no logic to it. And their anger kind of blinds them... I feel that maybe you should... take all that energy and all that anger and vent it into some sort of intelligent way of getting... the answer across. Because I'm sure that a lot of people [non-Sikhs] do kind of get scared and defensive and kind of shut their doors right in their faces when they do that.

Male informant (19): It's hard for me to say because I don't know very much about them... From what I know by who I've talked to... I think they do have a big say, because I remember reading in the paper once too... something happened in the States. I can't recall now, but they had banded together, and got all the Sikhs together... and they were able to say to the Indian government "Ok, this is what we want".

Female informant (7): I don't know too much about... them, but I think that to a degree... they have good intentions, I think... I realize that sounded kind of condescending, but I didn't mean it [to]. But I think that they have really good intentions and good goals... whether or not they've achieved them, I don't know... Given the size of them, the size can work either for or against them. I mean it can work for them, because you do have strength in numbers, but I mean it can work against you, because you have a huge bureaucracy that never gets anything done... I think a lot of them are kind of tied up with politics within their own organizations, that they kind of lose sight of what's really important...

CONSCIOUSNESS AND IDENTITY

1. NATURE AND IMPACT OF CANADIAN SOCIETY ON THE CANADIAN SIKH IDENTITY

This measure of consciousness addresses my original research question which asked: "How do Sikh youth perceive the degree and nature of discrimination against Canadian Sikhs by the Canadian government and Canadian citizens in the period since the 1984 Sikh crises? Based on this perception, what is the perceived impact upon the expression of Sikh identity?" Specifically, respondents were asked to comment on the reactions of non-Sikh Canadian citizens (the general population and the media) and the Canadian government to the Sikh way of life in the period since 1984, especially at times when Sikhs had become a focus in the media. Specifically, they were asked "Do you feel the Sikh way of life has been challenged and/or criticized by Canadian society [the Canadian government and Canadian citizens (media and general population)]? In what way?"

The General Population

In terms of the reaction of the general population of non-Sikh Canadian citizens, a common theme arose. Many respondents (16 out of 19) referred to three major events which sparked public controversy -- wearing turbans in the

R.C.M.P, allowing a turbaned Sikh into Royal Canadian Legion halls, and the right of Sikhs (youth and adults) to wear the Kirpan in public places. Two respondents expressed the perceived impact these controversies had on the freedom to comfortably express the Sikh way of life.

Female informant (5): Basically if it doesn't fit into their society, they don't want it, like the kirpan and the turbans, you know... I heard that they're letting cowboys hats in [to the Royal Canadian Legions] for the [Calgary] Stampede. That is western dress so, of course, they're going to allow it, but turbans aren't... if they don't like it, then they just don't want it.

Male informant (2): Anything that's new, people will generally distrust... They had a man wearing a turban [in a movie] and, uh, [he was] actually sacrificing somebody to the gods or something... I mean as far as what they see on television or, uh, in the movies you know, they [Canadian society] think that we're - we could all be psychos, for all they know.

Some respondents perceived that in the period since 1984 racist attitudes and actions of some Canadian citizens have been thought to be the result of Sikhs becoming a vulnerable target, especially during the times when the community had become the focus in the media. According to one female (5),

> I think the discrimination is about the same... racism has always been in Canada, but after 1984, uhm, the opportunity [for racism] just presented itself when Sikhs entered the public eye.

Another male informant (8) shared a similar view:

> A lot of it [is] that, it just gives them [racists] something new to harp on. They'll look at an article, and they'll read three words of the article or something, and they'll use that for Sikh bashing.

It appears that despite this perceived window of opportunity to discriminate against Sikhs, several respondents believe that educating Canadian society about Sikhs and Sikh issues would minimize conflicts, and hence discriminatory attitudes and actions. Specifically, these respondents attribute the perceived strained relationship between Sikhs and Canadian society to ignorance on the part of the larger society.

Female informant (14): The turban issue, uh, the color issue, the clothes you wear. I mean you can't go into the mall without feeling conscious about you wearing a [Punjabi] suit. Unfortunately, I think we as [Sikh] Edmontonians, we feel inhibited, that we shouldn't be out there... But I think the more that the Western civilization or people are exposed to [us], the less they feel intimidated. For example, the legion issue. Maybe they'll see our plight, as, as soldiers, as people who've been fighting all their lives for a land, for their own land, for their own identity and respect that...

Male informant (12): I get the feeling, like with the turban they [general population of non-Sikh Canadian citizens] don't think it is necessary to wear, and they think we are just doing it to change the traditions. And they think we are trying to challenge what they stand for. And they don't really have a clue what our religion is. I think if they did understand us, they wouldn't really be saying the things they did, you know?

Female informant (7): I think that the general attitude from Canadian society is that we're all terrorists. Do you know what I mean? I think there's kind of been... criticism, but that's just 'cause of a lack of understanding... I mean that's what all conflicts and kind of animosity arises from, I think, is from a lack of understanding and a lack of communication.

Male informant (19): I think we're challenged in the fact that we're going against a norm - Canadian - British values. But... I mean [if] you show something to somebody and you keep showing them, they'll eventually understand where you're coming from, who you are. And [if] you explain to them what this is all about, it's

only human nature to eventually understand what you are.

Male informant (9) I think absolutely it's been challenged. And I think the only way you can stop that is - it stems from ignorance. Ignorance stems from a lack of education. Right? And the only way to clear that is if you can put Sikhs in positions of power where you can get them to convey a positive message of who we are.

Female informant (17): People ask me things like "Why do you people wear turbans?"; "Why do you wear Indian suits?"; "Why do you carry a *concealed weapon*?" But I think we are facing these challenges by making friends, talking, explaining our differences to others. People are receptive and can learn to understand us, respect us.

The Media

In his article, *"Media, Minorities, and Misconceptions: The Portrayal by and Representation of Minorities in Canadian News Media", C. S.* Ungerleider (1991: 160) suggests that " the relative importance attached to the needs and interests of minorities is affected by their inclusion and location in a broadcast, newspaper, or newsmagazine". How does this sample perceive the 'inclusion and location' of Sikhs in the media? Generally, two distinct patterns emerge. One group of respondents (6 out of 19) believe that the media generally misrepresent Sikhs and Sikh issues. According to these respondents, the media is seen as sensationalizing acts of violence rather than underscoring issues relating to the oppression of Sikhs.

Female informant (7): I mean it's all subjective. They report what they want to report and they leave the rest out... You know, I mean think about it, do you ever really hear anything about the Hindus?... I never do. I mean, it's always what the Sikhs are doing... so what about the Hindus? I mean that's kind - a lot of it has to do with them... I mean I look at my parents for example. They're both university professors. My dad could be one of the most articulate guys I know but do they

ever make it to the news? No! Unless you kill somebody... that's the only way it's gonna make it to the news. So, I mean regardless of how many... Sikhs get educated or pursue professional careers, they're not going to make it to the news. They're not gonna raise awareness. It's those terrorists who are gonna raise awareness... and then, you know, [Sikhs] get classified by that standard.

Male informant (8): They [the media] portray them [the Sikhs] in whatever interests everybody. Very rarely [do] you see an article about how the Indian government is putting spies in Canada. Ah, how about that? Does anybody care? Nah, we're not worried about them. If they were Russian or something, ah, that would be different!

Female informant (14): I don't think there's ever been a good documentary about Sikh people. Uhm, maybe fifteen minutes worth, but that doesn't give it justice. Many times it's just focussed on the bad. Somebody killing somebody. Somebody hurting somebody else... Maybe at some point there'll be come issues about the real good [Sikh] people, the people that are in charge of some associations here [in Edmonton]; the people that take a stand in our - not only in Sikh issues - [for example], women's issues, any issue.

Male informant (9): I think the media, they portrayed Sikhs... in some situations it's positive. [But] they want a story. They want to hollywood- they'll sensationalize - they want to make it sell. Basically, they want their job right? They don't really care if they're Sikhs or not. And I think it's up to our people not to give them that chance; not to give them that opportunity where they can exploit us...

Taking an opposite stand, another group of seven respondents believe that the media have attempted to portray Sikhs in an impartial manner. Commenting specifically on the recent controversy over allowing Sikhs to wear turbans in Royal Canadian Legion halls, a male and female respondent stated the following:

Female informant (11): Actually since this last, the legion issue, it's been very good. [The media] has been all positive, really positive towards Sikhs. [Banning turbaned Sikhs from Legion halls] has been viewed as discriminatory.

Male informant (12): I think the media supports the Sikhs generally. Yah, I think that everytime there's an incident, the media actually understands what Sikhs are. They... have editorials explaining what Sikhs are, and how they fought for like the Queen and second World War... like... with the legion like, uh, the media supported the Sikhs all the way.

The theme of educating Canadian society appears again in a male respondent's (2) answer who recognizes the crucial role that Sikhs play in directing the approach that the media take with Sikh issues.

> They're [the media] are getting a lot better than they used to... I think they did things very unintentionally that hurt us a little bit. Uh, I notice these days they have a lot more respect. And [Sikhs] have had a great effect. When they let the media know about things they really didn't like, the way that they [the media] were portraying them [the Sikhs], uh, they [the media] responded and they handled it quite well.

The Canadian Government

Just under half of the respondents expressed their approval of the Canadian government with respect to how the government approaches conflicts faced by Canadian Sikhs (i.e. the R.C.M.P. turban issue, and the Royal Canadian Legion issue).

Male informant (2): Obviously there's gonna be groups that are gonna oppose [Sikhs], but that has really nothing to do with the way, uh, the entire society has, has helped us. I mean, as far as the Canadian government's policies are concerned, they've always been very accommodating to us [Sikhs].

Female informant (17): I think they [are] open, [they] keep their policies open, [and] allow for any differences among Sikhs and other nationalities.

Female informant (5): I don't think the government is discriminatory, because if we have, you know - [if] your boss is like "you can't wear a turban" or something, you can always go to the Human Rights Commission. Uhm, I wouldn't say there's discrimination by the government.

In opposition to this positive attitude, two respondents expressed doubt about the actions of the government. For example, a relative of one female respondent (6) had experienced discrimination at his place of employment and found it difficult to receive governmental support. Another female informant (7)

voiced her skepticism about the enforcement of government policies on human rights when she stated this:

> They [the government] have policies, but I don't think they necessarily reinforce them. I mean you can have all the legislation you want. If there's nobody to do anything about it, what good is it? It's just words on paper... it's lip service.

Although commenting on discriminatory episodes, the remaining respondents did not (45%) specify the source of that discrimination. For example, with respect to wearing the turban, some respondents commented on the resulting discrimination on the part of Canadian society and did not identify the specific group(s) that was thought to be responsible for this discrimination.

2. THE IMPACT OF THE 1984 SIKH CRISES ON SIKH CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION

It has been argued by Bhachu (1991a) that the Indian Army attack at Amritsar and the subsequent Delhi riots stimulated an identification with a "universal Sikh identity" among British Sikhs, "regardless of caste, class, gender and histories of migration" (Bhachu, 1991a:51). This "reaffirmation of a common Sikh identity was a consequence of a very powerful threat" (1991:51) to the survival of Sikhism, a threat which provoked "unprecedented emotion" (1991a:51) among Sikhs worldwide. Is this observation found to exist among members of this sample of Sikh youth?

In an attempt to address my original research question which is concerned with determining the extent to which selected ethno-religious historical events are seen as contributing to ethnic consciousness and identity, respondents were asked

the following: "What impact did the attack at the Golden Temple complex and the subsequent conflict between Sikh and the Indian government have on yourself?".

In terms of detecting an increased level of Sikh consciousness a definite pattern emerged. Specifically, eight out of the nineteen respondents interviewed stated that they have personally became "more conscious" of Sikh affairs, their heritage and the religious doctrine.

Female informant (1): For me it shook me out of my dream world. I realized about conflicts in Punjab. My parents made sure we [the children] knew as much as possible about Sikhism. From then on, I've tried to gain as much knowledge as possible about Sikhs and Sikhism. I have tried to educate anyone interested in my religion.

Male informant (15): It [the attack] strengthened our [family] belief in the Sikh religion, and what it originally came into existence for.

Female informant (14): I did not know very much about the Sikh religion before 1984 - till the whole community just changed, especially the first generation [parents] [who] were sort of talking about it and were upset about the whole thing... we had this parade that I was involved in and... [it] sort of brought to light that pain... so from that day it still fascinates me; the stories and the issues and everything.

Male informant (8): It was far away. I didn't understand. I didn't understand the Indian government. Now I understand.... the Indian government didn't bother with a conflict resolution... [it] went with a straight out attack assault.

Female informant (7): I just think that you know everything that happened that year really, uh, uh, I would say that it did make a difference, just kind of raised awareness. I mean whether it's like that year or four years later when you fully understand everything, you know... a lot of it has to do with, uhm, growing up and stuff...

Male informant (9): I... want to be educated by everyone. I want to learn more about it, and talk to people... who were actually there [in India]... what actually really did happen, it really interests me.

Male informant (19): It's made us more understanding about Sikhs. It's made us [his family] more talkative. Because we'll sit at home and talk about it.

The idea that the attack violated the belief that a sacred and revered place of God is invulnerable was another pattern of consciousness that emerged.

Female informant (7) ...to go there and see all the destruction... it... makes you realize what's important... I mean, destruction to such a sacred place, I mean that's kind of such a symbol of hatred and, and hostility, I just, I can't even find the words. I mean, it just kind of shows how nothing is sacred... I just don't understand how they could have done that... I mean, it's a place of God... it's just kind of like, trying to kill God... they did so much damage, I mean not just to the Golden Temple, but psychologically to an entire race of people.

Female informant (17): For them to have tried to attack it, it made me realize how delicate our religion can be. How someone can so easily hurt what you believe in.

Female informant (14): I was very hurt. I felt that it was a religious place, where God... and where all the wonderful things are supposed to be, where they're supposed to be safe, and knew the walls were made out of this unpenetrable stuff that cannot hurt you - because it's - the Golden Temple. But then [reality] kind of steps in and the bullets went through and hit our own people, and it's, it's hurtful.

It was also found that an increased degree of consciousness was coupled with an emotional response. These interviewees expressed their frustration, anger, "hurt", sadness, or confusion about the 1984 attack and the subsequent violence and "injustice" they feel Sikhs in India had endured. Some respondents stated the following:

Male informant (2): I know on a personal basis the... look that I saw in my parents eyes, just when they watched the telecast, uh, is something I'll never forget.

Female informant (14): I mean, that - that kind of pain, that kind of hurt doesn't ever go away... it's, how can I say? It's like a death in our family. A very hurtful death in the family. There's some unspeakable disease that nobody's found a cure [for]...

Male informant (12): I was really distraught for a couple of months. I couldn't really think straight, you know. Like it was always on my mind...

Male informant (9): Well, I think it was a very sad day for any Sikh... And in a sense, it was a sad day for anybody that had some kind of place to worship, right?... to see the scenes, just seeing what happened or how many people had died, I mean that was, it had a huge impact on me in that way.

Female informant (11): I would say that the attack was a ridiculous decision to have been carried through by the government, and the resulting violence was terrible... I felt really bad, especially seeing pictures, media coverage... you know, all the slaughtering and all the fighting. I just felt a tie at that time... I could feel their pain, and it was quite conscious raising I guess at that time.

In addition to detecting a sense of Sikh consciousness, my purpose was also to explore whether and, if so, in what way the 1984 attack and subsequent crises events impacted upon this sample's perception of Sikh identity. An adjustment of Sikh self-identification and an increased affiliation to the Sikh identity was the main theme which arose from the responses.

Female informant (3): To be very honest, initially, my thoughts were negative. I was very embarrassed to be Sikh because I hate attention being drawn to anyone, especially Sikhs. But as I've "done my homework" and read up on finding out the facts for myself and not just hearing it from the Gurdwara and my parents, my force is stronger with our Sikhs. I can honestly say I'm finally proud to be Sikh and can now identify myself as a Sikh.

Female informant (4): Then it was... like I heard about it [the 1984 Sikh massacre]. My parents went on about it but other than that I couldn't care less. I went through a period of being anti-Sikh and all that. [Now] I hear stories... and I'm thinking if it happened now I'd be way more affected by it... I guess I'm more mature enough to actually accept it... But then [in 1984] I was barely ten.

Male informant (2): When the 1984 crisis came, well I was 15 years old, and there was a lot of emotion stirring up, and all of a sudden it seemed a lot more urgent to start doing something now... Seeing the things that I've read about, the Akal Takhat and stuff, how it was our seat of God, it was our power... where Sikh leaders met for centuries to discuss battle strategies and political strategies, uhm, to see that almost demolished completely shook me... It shook the foundations of what I was... [The attack] made [practicing the Five Ks'] more immediate. I just decided instead of putting it off for a few years, I'd do it right now. I'm definitely glad that I did.

Female informant (14): Uhm, for my family... our community ties at that time became very, very, very strong, finding more Sikh people, more friends that were Sikh... and... it made you look at your culture a bit more as to who you [are]. Not some middle person, half in the western civilization, half in the Sikh civilization. I mean, you were born a Sikh, and you're gonna die a Sikh and that is your, I mean your life... It really made you focus where you mother country is - your mother culture. [Now] I feel more comfortable I'm in my own crowd. I don't have to put a mask on. I can be a Sikh girl.

Female informant (17): It [the 1984 attack] reminded me of the importance of, the purpose of having Harimandir Sahib - it symbolized our Sikhism, our religion. I think it was just a big symbol for all of Sikhs, including myself and my family that our culture can be hurt, that people want to hurt it, and [it] made us realize that we do need it; it's important, very important to us [to] keep it going, the value of it... the beauty of Sikhism.

Female informant (7): I mean I've thought about it sometimes and... I don't know, it really elevates kind of your sense of identity... I mean everything that happened that year is gonna affect you somehow whether it be directly or indirectly. It's affected me more in some indirect ways because, I was quite young when it happened and I didn't fully understand it... I mean, you know it's not constantly on your mind, but I'll sit and reflect about things and I kind of, you know, think about my own sense of identity and of course, my religion and my, my ethnic background is gonna, you know, be a part of that.

Interestingly, some respondents commented on how the attack made the Punjabi language more important to teach to the next generation of Sikhs. Again, the idea of retaining the Sikh identity through language is expressed.

Female informant (17): It [the 1984 attack] has awakened me to realize that [Punjabi] has to be taught. Like it was sort of a factor in making me think "Ok, I do have to teach this to the children".

Female informant (7): I think [the attack] had a lot to do with [wanting to teach Punjabi to children], especially going there, especially after everything happened and just kind of realizing that you kind of have to have a sense of identity and stuff, and how your identity, how closely it is tied to your, your ethnic heritage or whatever.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the main themes and insights which emerged from the interviews conducted on nineteen Edmonton Sikh youth. There were a range of possible responses arising from three broad questions. First, in what way had this sample of Sikh youth perceived the boundaries of the Sikh corporate identity? That is, what did they consider constitutes being a Sikh? Second, in what way did these respondents define and express themselves as Sikh? With respect to these first two questions, respondents were asked to comment on the importance of particular features of Sikh identity that are considered to be the most significant defining features of a Sikh. Because an assumption is being made as to which factors of Sikh identity are considered significant, the respondent was also asked to provide a personal definition of Sikh identity. It was thought that this personal statement would allow for a broader definition of Sikh identity which could go beyond the sum of the specific identity factors limited by the interview schedule, the outcome being a more accurate statement of the *perception* of Sikh identity.

The third major question asked: "To what extent are selected ethno-historical events seen as contributing to ethnic consciousness and identity?" Specifically, respondents were asked if the attack on the Golden Temple complex and subsequent crises events had an impact upon an Edmonton Sikh youth's consciousness, perception and expression of Sikh identity. This last question is significant in that it explores whether there was a 'situational' effect in how respondents perceived the salience of Sikh identity, and consequently, how they

defined themselves as Sikh over a period of ten years since 1984. With respect to consciousness construction, respondents were asked: "In what way do ethnic group members construct a sense of ethnic consciousness?" With respect to Sikh youth they were asked: "Which sources have Edmonton Sikh youth drawn upon to develop their sense of Sikh consciousness, particularly since the 1984 Sikh crises?" By exploring the nature of awareness that a Sikh has of his/her Sikh community an understanding emerged of how respondents' sense of identity had been constructed particularly since the 1984 Sikh crises. Specifically, respondents were asked to comment on the influence of three main areas - the media, organizational and informal involvement with the Sikh community, and political and social awareness and perceptions.

The next chapter summarizes and offers conclusions regarding the salient themes, insights and patterns derived from this analysis. In addition, based on these detected themes, patterns and insights, several possibilities for future research are recommended.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since this is an exploratory analysis of Sikh identity, and more broadly, ethnic identity, this chapter summarizes the salient themes, patterns, and insights that surfaced in the preceding analysis of Sikh identity and consciousness. Based on these themes, patterns, and insights, a series of research recommendations are presented which may prove useful for future research concerned with the conceptualization of ethnic identity. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the present study's impact on current literature regarding ethnic group identity.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Corporate Identity

The Punjabi Language

The major theme which emerged in the discussion of the Punjabi language involved the use of Punjabi in the maintenance of the Sikh culture. Since it was considered an embodiment of Sikh culture, and the main method by which the culture was conveyed to future generations, Punjabi was thought by these respondents to be an important defining feature of what constitutes being a Sikh (corporate identity). Particularly, this was expressed in the desire for their children to learn the Punjabi language.

One crucial point to mention at this point is that although respondents want their children to learn Punjabi, the majority of them do not know how to read or write their language. If it is valid that culture is transmitted through

language, and respondents do not know how to read or write, how will this effect the transmission of Sikh culture? Would relying exclusively on the oral transmission of culture result in the erosion of traditions and the cessation of new knowledge derived from Sikh literature? Specifically, would this form of illiteracy seriously undermine the influence of the Guru Granth Sahib, the main compilation of Sikh scriptures which significantly defines the religious character of a Sikh? If the knowledge of the Guru Granth Sahib rests solely on oral transmission will its content be fully understood and expressed? If not, will the characteristics which constitute a Sikh change over time as oral transmission of the religion increases? In what way? As Ahluwalia (1987:18) asks,

> Is the self-development... of Sikhism coming to an end before its fullest expression?... Do Sikhism and [the] contemporary Sikh community have a common destiny in the sense that the survival and progress of one depends upon that of the other? Or do they have two distinct destinies?

With respect to ethnic groups, in general, what impact does reading and writing illiteracy have on the transmission and expression of an ethnic group's identity?

Khalistan and the Sikh Boundary

One main pattern arose out of the question inquiring into the importance of having a Sikh homeland. Whether they are in favor of it or not, most respondents believe that the realization of Khalistan is unrealistic. The idea that Sikhs are not a unified community (especially, politically) was offered as a main reason why Khalistan remains an unrealized goal. What does this say about the boundaries of

the Sikh Panth? Does the fact that it does not or may not in the future support the need for a nation undermine its claim as a legitimate ethnic group?

Corporate Identity Definition by Individual

A significant pattern surfaced with respect to how respondents defined what constitutes being a Sikh. Generally, respondents provided an inclusive definition of what, broadly speaking, constitutes a Sikh. One particularly interesting insight was provided by one respondent who assigned an ascribed quality to being a Sikh in the sense that once someone was born a Sikh, he/she would be viewed by others as such unless a verbal denial of that identity was declared by the person. Is this perception of Sikh identity common among younger generations of Sikhs? If so, what does this say about the transmission of the Sikh identity?

In this sample, most respondents believed that all who claim they are Sikh or *choose* to practice Sikhism should be considered Sikh. This claim, however, was bound by certain expectations. Most agreed that Sikhs should value and respect the teachings of the Gurus and the Word of the Guru as documented in the Guru Granth Sahib. While most respondents did not adhere to the view that a strict, orthodox definition of the Khalsa Sikh constituted the sole definition of a Sikh, there was a major trend to suggest that Sikhs should affirm the spiritual significance of the Five K's. In fact, some respondents envisioned the ideal type Sikh whose closeness and understanding of God was achieved by one's commitment to practicing the Five K's. However, these respondents recognized that discriminatory attitudes and actions in the Canadian mainstream and that growing

up in a "westernized environment" often led Sikhs away from this ideal type. Therefore, with respect to the Five K's, the conditions of a Sikh for these respondents were ultimately re-adjusted to coincide with other respondent's views - that is, Sikhs should place high value on the Word of the Gurus, trust that the Gurus guidance will help one in securing a relationship with God, and attempt to "be the best Sikh you can be".

In reference to the literature on the transformative nature of an ethnic group presented in chapter one, this re-adjustment illustrates well the idea that while a sense of ethnic identity is felt to persist over time and space, the specific nature of an ethnic boundary is determined, as Weber asserted, by the "...experiences of specific ethnic categories and the kinds of political [and socio-cultural] boundaries in which they happen to be located" (Saram, 1989b:3). In this case, respondents defined the constitution of a Sikh by considering the Canadian socio-cultural context which influences how a Sikh can express him/herself. Future research may examine how the Sikh identity is defined in other socio-cultural contexts. What is the nature of the Sikh identity's transformation as it is expressed in various socio-cultural contexts?

Another context where a Sikh may be defined differently exists at the level of family. Therefore, future research may explore how the parents of these Sikh youth define a Sikh. What is the relationship between the definition provided by a Sikh youth and his/her parent? If the definitions differ, what does this say about the continuity of the Sikh identity, and what is the nature of its transformation as

the identity is passed down from generation to generation?

A final context that may be explored involves a comparative/historical analysis. In the present study, it was suggested that respondents' definition of what constitutes being a Sikh was consistent with the "virtually unchallenged" legal definition provided by the *Sikh Rahit Maryada* in 1950. Has this definition stood the test of time for Sikh youth in other socio-cultural contexts? With respect to the Sikh Panth, in general, how unified is the Panth in its acceptance of all Sikhs regardless of their Khalsa affiliation, particularly since the 1984 Sikh crises which may have sparked a re-newed appreciation of the Khalsa identity?

Gurdwara

Another pattern emerged which suggested that attending the Gurdwara is an essential role for Sikhs as it was thought to help solidify one's relationship with God. However, while the function of gurdwara was recognized, the majority of the respondents stated that they attend gurdwara only occasionally. It would be interesting to discover the extent to which the gurdwara is playing a role in facilitating one's spirituality and in enhancing the feeling of community solidarity among Sikhs, and particularly among Sikh youth. As mentioned above, James Chadney (1984) claims that the gurdwara acts as the main source of community solidarity for the Vancouver Sikh community. Does this apply to Sikhs in other locations, such as in Edmonton? Furthermore, does the gurdwara function

as a source of community solidarity, and Sikh ethnic boundary maintenance, for the parents and/or grandparents of Sikh youth more so than it does for Sikh youth?

Cultural Traits

Besides a religious definition, there were indications to suggest that a Sikh is also defined in cultural terms. Are there cultural attributes that clearly distinguish a Sikh from a non-Sikh? The Punjabi language, although not exclusively used by Sikhs, was thought by several respondents to be instrumental in transmitting the Sikh heritage and, thus, in defining the identity of future generations of Sikhs. Thus, it was viewed as an essential feature of being a Sikh. Maintaining Sikh ties, especially in the form of social gatherings (i.e. attending bhangra parties and events such as Vaisakhi), was viewed as another role of being a Sikh, as was, to a lesser degree, observing Sikh food and dress, and particular customs such as arranged marriages. Are these qualities exclusively Sikh? If so, in what way?

Caste Observation

A pattern indicated that caste observation is associated with Sikh culture, but respondents generally agree that caste identification is incompatible with the Sikh philosophy of an egalitarian society. Specifically, there was no indication to suggest that discrimination or a feeling of superiority is associated with the identification to any particular

caste. Yet despite this, some respondents suggest that caste endogamy persists. Future researchers may consider examining the extent to which caste endogamy exists for Sikhs in other Canadian cities and other countries. If it exists to a significant extent, what impact does this have on the notion of an egalitarian Sikh society which emphasizes unity?

A "persisting sense of groupness"?

A final factor of corporate Sikh identity which was expressed by respondents involves the notion of the perceived "persisting sense of groupness" (Edwards & Doucette, 1987:54) and the perceived presence of a durable Sikh boundary. Though the constituent elements of an ethnic group's identity are continuously undergoing re-evaluation and change, my analysis suggests that a "persisting sense of a groupness" exists which contributes to defining the boundaries of an ethnic group. That is, the satisfaction produced from a sense of belonging to the Sikh community, the reasons given for maintaining Sikh ties, the desire to present a favourable image of a "Sikh", and the desire to transmit Sikh cultural and religious traditions to future generations reflect a strong sense of groupness among these respondents. In a sense, the Sikh concept of *qaum* is well expressed in this sample. The term *qaum* has commonly been translated as 'nation'. However, as McLeod (1989a:107) argues, this translation is a "thoroughly misguided choice". Originating from Arabic, *qaum* literally means 'a people who stand together'. It was adopted by Sikhs and was

intended to "denote a strong sense of corporate identity" (McLeod, 1989a:107), rather than, as the word 'nation' suggests, an independent Sikh homeland. Although *qaum* is not concretely crystallized in the form of a homeland, is the nature of this concept reflected insofar as respondents sense that there exists a common Sikh identity to which all Sikhs attune themselves? Future research may examine further the nature of this "persisting sense of groupness". Furthermore, is a persisting sense of a Sikh identity felt in the same way and for the same reasons by Sikhs worldwide? Also, is there a difference in the sense of corporate identity between Sikh youth and their parents' generation?

2. Perceived Individual Identification to the Sikh Identity

In general, a specific pattern was detected with respect to the religious character of a Sikh. That is, when asked to define themselves as Sikhs, respondents invariably referred to their spiritual or religious expression as a Sikh first and foremost, and then, to a considerably lesser degree, considered the Punjabi cultural aspects present in their characters. Specifically, being Sikh *religiously* was viewed as a learning process often thought to evolve as one matured emotionally and psychologically. Respondents expressed various religious qualities (including a reverence for the Gurus, a belief in the Guru Granth Sahib, and the spiritual significance assigned to the Five K's) which revolved around the theme that emphasized the personal responsibility of taking an active role in establishing a relationship with God throughout one's life. Very fittingly, this emphasis on

learning to be Sikh illustrates the nature of a Sikh above all else, as "Sikh" literally means "disciple".

The Five K's

The practice of the Five K's emerged as a main concern for the respondents, and thus, can be assumed to be a necessary defining feature of a Sikh from their point of view. However, although the Five K's may be regarded as a defining characteristic of a Sikh, there is a pattern to suggest that their practice tends to be influenced by the personal evaluation of one's life circumstances. For this sample, this involved weighing the demands of a competitive Canadian society particularly in terms of employment; the social normative demands of the Canadian mainstream (i.e. responding to prejudice and discrimination); parental expectations; and the importance assigned to personal spiritual growth. The negotiation of these various factors may suggest the loosening bond of religious tradition but this, by no means, translates into a move away from Sikhism. Rather, reverence for the spiritual significance of the Five K's was expressed quite consistently. However, many insisted that the Five K's should be practiced solely for the purpose of spiritual enlightenment and not merely for the sake of satisfying religious tradition. Future research may attempt to discover whether this pattern is a widespread phenomenon among the younger generation of Sikhs (i.e. 18 to 30 years). If so, what does this say about the future expression of Sikhism and the evolutionary pattern of the Sikh community, particularly with respect to the expression and perceived significance of the Five K's?

Maintaining Ties and Caste Affiliation

Two other factors emerged as indicators of self-identification. They are the maintenance of Sikh ties and caste affiliation. With respect to maintaining ties, a pattern emerged to suggest that maintaining ties provides one with a sense of identity, for males in particular, and a sense of belonging for females in particular. Future research may determine the extent to which this apparent gender difference in how women and men understand their place in the community is a significant observation. If found to be significant, would this suggest that women and men construct a sense of ethnic identity differently? In what ways? What does this say about the overall conceptualization of ethnic identity?

The theme of identity and belonging was also detected in the reasons given for the acknowledgment of one's caste. Specifically, respondents who identified with a caste spoke of the cultural traditions and sense of family history which caste provides. This, in turn, enhanced a feeling of belonging within the community. This observation may explain, in part, why caste endogamy persists. Further analysis might verify this hypothesis.

3. The Impact of Ethno-Religious Historical Events

The Sikh Identity and Discrimination in the Canadian Context

It was generally suggested that negative external influences such as discrimination and prejudice caused by some non-Sikh Canadian citizens make it difficult to function as a Khalsa Sikh (particularly, the practice of wearing the turban and carrying the kirpan). With respect to the relationship

between the impact of the Sikh crises and the degree of discrimination an interesting pattern arose among some respondents. Specifically, it was believed that the periods during which Sikhs were in the media limelight, in particular, provided an opportunity for discriminatory attitudes and actions to surface from a latent state. Future research might determine if this concept of, what I will term, "latent discrimination" is a valid observation. Do minority ethnic groups, in general, (particularly, visible minority ethnic groups) experience this concept of "latent discrimination"?

Another pattern emerged which indicated that discrimination could be minimized if Sikhs placed more emphasis on educating non-Sikh Canadians about Sikh practices, thereby allowing a more accepting society in which Sikhs could practice their way of life without fear of persecution. To what extent is the education of non-Sikh Canadian citizens occurring? Are Sikhs actively promoting themselves in a positive light? Are Sikhs equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to positively promote their way of life? If so, how are Canadian citizens responding? Will education promote tolerance and acceptance of ethnic group lifestyles which deviate from the Canadian mainstream?

Some respondents suggested that education must start at the grassroots. That is, they encouraged Sikhs to educate their friends and acquaintances about the Sikh way of life. Others suggested that more emphasis must be placed on educating the media. What is the role of Sikh

parents in the transmission of Sikh culture? Are children learning about Sikhism and the Sikh way of life, particuiarly via the written word? What method(s) of education would aid in allowing ethnic minority groups to comfortably express their ethnic identity in the Canadian mainstream?

The Impact of the 1984 Sikh Crises on the Expression and Construction of the Sikh Identity

A clear pattern emerged which appeared to indicate that the Sikh crises events heightened Sikh consciousness and the importance of affiliating oneself to the Sikh community and a Sikh identity. It appeared in some cases that this "elevated sense of [Sikh] identity" was fueled by an emotional response to the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple complex. If this pattern is found to exist among other Sikhs, what does this say about the future transmission of Sikhism? Did this pivotal event in Sikh history impact on the expression of the Sikh way of life? Despite the fact that many respondents declared a "raised awareness" of Sikh issues and a "reaffirmation of Sikh identity", only two male respondents stated that the 1984 Sikh crises had an impact on their expression of Sikh identity - that is, their practice of the Five K's. Which factors of Sikh identity are and are not being affected by the crises events, particularly among the next generation of Sikhs? For example, has the 1984 Sikh crises influenced the degree of in-group ties within the Sikh community, particularly among Sikh youth?

Future research could examine further the extent to and the nature in

which ethno-religious historical events impact on the transmission and expression of an ethnic group identity. In particular, exploring the way in which culture is transmitted in the family may lend further insight into the impact of ethno-religious historical events on an individual's construction and expression of ethnic identity. In addition, the age of the individual must be strongly considered when attempting to examine the impact of pivotal events, such as the 1984 crisis. In the present study, some respondents admitted that only as they matured psychologically and emotionally did they feel a profound impact of the 1984 crises events.

Constructing a Sense of Sikh Consciousness

There was an indication to suggest that personal correspondence with relatives in India, gurdwara lectures, and Sikh publications and television programs were sources of information for respondents. However, a more prominent pattern emerged which suggested that friends, parents and the media (specifically, the national or local news on television and in newspapers) are the main sources of information which respondents use to generate a sense of Sikh consciousness and, specifically, to generate an understanding of the Sikh crises events. Considering the signficant influence of mainstream media, it becomes necessary to ask "In what way does ethnic consciousness develop and what is its nature when its construction is dependent upon the point of view of an outsider?".

Based on these sources, respondents were asked to gauge their

awareness of Sikh affairs worldwide and comment on the degree and nature of conflict and violence that they believe exists in India at present. The majority of the respondents claimed to follow major Sikh issues only and generally admit to an unsophisticated understanding of Sikh affairs or the effectiveness of Sikh organizations which are aimed at reducing Sikh conflicts. Despite this, all respondents agreed that the conflict between Sikhs and Indian government persists (although there is little agreement as to the perceived amount of violence existing in India). What does this level of understanding say about a possible "reaffirmation of a common Sikh identity" (Bhachu, 1991a:51)? That is, is it an affective response and resulting sense of violation, rather than relying on the knowledge of the political and economic circumstances inherent to the crisis events, which has led to a "reaffirmation" in one's sense of Sikh identity in this sample of Sikh youth and possibly among other Sikhs? If so, what impact does this have on the resolution of Sikh conflicts and the relationship that the Sikh diaspora communities choose to develop with their ancestral homeland - the Punjab? Related to this question is the struggle for Khalistan. To what extent is the struggle to realize Khalistan fueled solely by emotion? If it is, to a large extent, is this affective response affecting the legitimate pursuit of an independent homeland for Sikhs? If so, how?

This section provided a summary of the various themes, patterns and insights which emerged from the interview data of nineteen Edmonton Sikh youth, and offered several recommendations for future research in ethnic identity. The following section involves a discussion of the present study's impact on current literature regarding ethnic group identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this thesis is to provide future ethnic identity researchers, and specifically, researchers in Sikh studies, with a broader appreciation of the complex nature of an ethnic identity so that "when more systematic research questions and research designs [are formulated], they will be meaningful" (Palys, 1992: 83). Consistent with Driedger's (1989: 140) suggestion that "researchers need to sort out the different factors and the patterns or profiles of ethno-cultural identity", this thesis presents various themes, patterns and insights which, it is hoped, will serve to identify some important variables involved in ethnic identity construction, perception and expression, in particular, among Sikh youth. With respect to ethnic identity research, in general, this study supports theories which stress the multidimensional and evolving character of an ethnic group identity. Namely, this thesis supports Driedger's (1989: 139) conclusion regarding his comparative study of Canadian ethnic groups that "ethno-cultural identity tends to be multi-dimensional clustering around a multiplicity of factors such as language use, religious practice, endogamy, parochial education, choice of in-group friends, use of ethnic media, and participation in ethnic volunteer organizations" and that

"...individuals and ethnic groups vary in the extent to which they emphasize different identity factors" (Driedger, 1989: 140). The present study supports this view particularly by demonstrating the possible impact of ethno-religious historical events, ethnic consciousness, place of residence, age, sex, and the role of family on ethno-cultural identity.

The Role of History

As mentioned in chapter one, the impact of history on the salience of one's ethnic identity has been supported by several studies including Ganguly's (1992) study of East Indian American immigrants, Winland's (1993) research on the Mennonite "identity crisis", and Gupta's (1992) study of the "Sikh militant imago". Kallen's 1977 study on the Jewish identity also emphasizes the impact of an ethnic group's history on the perpetuation of an ethnic identity. Kallen (in Driedger, 1989:148) argues that

> Although tragic for the Jews, the Nazi holocaust in the 1940's and the present struggles in the Near East may be a reminder of the conflict that is a part of their historical past... Such historical symbols can create a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and a sense of continuing tradition that is important and worth perpetuating.

The religious historical symbols of a Sikh, especially the Five K's and the Guru Granth Sahib (as a symbol of Truth), were found to be significant defining features of what constitutes a Sikh for these respondents, and thus provided them with a "sense of continuing tradition". In addition, in terms of the salience of religious orientation, this study supports Kallen's view that ethno-religious historical events may serve to spark a re-newed appreciation of and affiliation to

one's ethnic identity. In addition to the role of history, the present study also emphasizes the independent and interactive effects of an individual's psychological and emotional growth, gender, the impact of the Canadian mainstream in terms of discrimination and its impact on ethnic identity expression, and the role that family plays in the transmission of an ethnic group's way of life and in the discussion of pivotal ethno-religious events.

The Role of Family and Mother-Tongue Retention

Apart from the role it played regarding the impact of the Sikh crises, the family also had an impact on mother-tongue retention (i.e. understanding or knowledge of the ethnic language as opposed to actual use of the language). For these respondents, mother-tongue retention was seen as playing a necessary role in the transmission of the Sikh culture. In addition, home use of Punjabi was emphasized as the main method by which future generations of Sikhs would acquire the mother-tongue. Studies (Reitz, 1974; Driedger, 1976; O'Bryan et al., 1976; Herberg, 1989) conducted in Canada have demonstrated that mother- tongue retention is considered significant for several Canadian ethnic groups in terms of ethnic group maintenance and ethnic group participation. These groups include the "Japanese, Czechoslovaks, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Poles, Portuguese, Russians and Ukrainians" (Herberg, 1989: 287). Despite this, however, actual home-use of the mother-tongue is on the decline for several ethnic groups, including the "Dutch, Filipinos, Germans, Hungarians, Jewish, and Scandinavians" (Herberg, 1989: 290). Furthermore, according to Herberg (1989: 290) "In contrast

to the figures for mother-tongue retention, no ethnicity [in Canada] showed an upturn or even stability in the Home-Use Cohesion Ratio between 1971 and 1981". Thus, while there is an expressed desire to teach Punjabi in the home, future studies on successive generations of Sikhs will determine the extent to which the Punjabi language is actually transmitted within the Sikh family.

Ethnic Consciousness

In this study, ethnic consciousness also appears to be a factor affecting ethnic identity. Although the Sikh crises events may have prompted their influence, two factors of ethnic consciousness emerged as significant in this study - in-group friends and family. While research has acknowledged the significance of in-group friends as an indicator of ethno-cultural identity (Driedger, 1975; O'Bryan et al., 1976; Isajiw, 1987), the present study has positively correlated in-group association with degree of ethnic consciousness. Specifically, this study suggests that ethnic consciousness seems to be most significantly influenced by family members and in-group friends, particularly in terms of discussing conflicts present within the community and the associated impact these conflicts may have on the ethnic group's religion, culture and traditions.

In terms of the impact of media on ethnic consciousness, the results of this study are consistent with O'Bryan et al.'s (1976) conclusions regarding ten Canadian non-charter groups. Specifically, O' Bryan et al. (1976) found that listening to "ethnic radio and [reading ethnic] newspapers were [considered] the least important" (Driedger, 1989:152). The present study supports this conclusion

and hypothesizes that ethnic media may be considered insignificant in terms of raising ethnic consciousness primarily because of mother-tongue deficiency. Moreover, this study suggests that in times of ethnic strife, ethnic group members who do not rely on their own ethnic media will construct their sense of ethnic consciousness, in part, from the point of view of an outsider - namely, media from the mainstream or host society. This reliance on an outsider's viewpoint, of course, has implications in terms of how ethnic group members proceed to construct their sense of ethnic identity.

"A persisting sense of groupness"

Despite this study's emphasis on the dynamic character of ethnic group identity, this thesis also supports the view that ethnic group members share a persisting "sense of peoplehood based on presumed shared sociocultural experience and/or similar physical characteristics" (Driedger, 1989: 136). With respect to the group of Sikh youth under examination, it is suggested that Sikh youth may have developed a "persisting sense of groupness" based on their desire to transmit the Sikh culture and religion, to maintain Sikh ties and a sense of belonging within the group, and to present a favorable image of a "Sikh" to outsiders. Thus, while the Sikh identity has been demonstrated in this context as being complex and ever-changing nature there also exists a possible perceived presence of a durable Sikh boundary. In his examination of the Vancouver Sikh community in 1984, James Chadney (1984:164-165) expresses this idea of the evolving Sikh identity and the sense of a Sikh boundary:

> The setting and the community have been constantly changing and will continue to change. In a word, there have been numerous variations on a theme, but the theme of Sikhism remains constant. It is viewed by the Vancouver Sikhs themselves as a relatively stable and enduring identity, influenced by their past, guiding their present and certain to affect their future.

Ethnic Identity: Concluding Remarks

This study has demonstrated that understanding the nature of the "total ethnic identity profile" (Driedger, 1989:153) requires researchers to acknowledge its complex and ever-changing nature. While ethnic identity boundaries may be perceived to exist and persist, the nature of an ethnic identity is not static. Rather, its nature is formed and dependent upon several interacting and independent factors such as age, sex, socio-cultural context, ethno-religious historical events, the role of family, and ethnic consciousness.

Table 1.

THE FIVE MAIN FEATURES OF GURU NANAK'S SPIRITUAL THOUGHT	
1. Monotheistic Concept of God	*- The belief that there is one eternally, constant God* *- Sat Kartar (True Creator)* *- Sat Nam (True Name)*
2. The Concept of Guru	*- Teacher and embodiment of Truth used for spiritual guidance. Servant of God's Word.*
3. Secular Living	*-Engaging in worldly concerns is encouraged. However, the maintenance of a truthful lifestyle is required of a Sikh. Dishonorable conduct includes lying, cheating, fornication, and polluting oneself with harmful products.*
4. Egalitarian Society	*- Ethnic, gender, and caste discrimination is prohibited.* *- Salvation is open to all regardless of caste, creed or sex.*
5. Paths to Salvation	*-The repetition of God's name (nam japo) is required to train the ego (haumain, literally "I am") to overcome the five sins - lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Guru Nanak named his devotees Sikhs - "disciples" or knowledge seekers who sought to understand the Word of God and to translate this knowledge into action [particularly in the form of work (kirit karo), and giving in charity (vand cako)].*

Table 2.

THE SIKH GURUS	MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS
Guru Nanak (1469-1539)	*-founder of Sikhism (see Table 1).*
Guru Angad (1504-1552)	*-adopted Sikh spiritual script, Gurmukhi, and printed copies of hymns . Also, formalized the practice of communal meals (Guru Ka Langar) and developed system of collecting offerings.*
Guru Amar Das (1479-1574)	*- emphasized the importance of revering the Guru - appointed agents to each parish who were responsible for collecting offerings and organizing worship (masand system). Also, formally established the gurdwara*
Guru Ram Das (1534-1581)	*-commenced the excavation of the sacred pool in, what is now known as, Amritsar.*
Guru Arjan (1563-1606)	*-constructed the Harimandir Sahib, the main place of worship for all Sikhs and compiled the Sikh sacred scriptures (1603-1604) (Bani Adi Granth). His execution led to the development of a system designed to defend the Sikh identity.*
Guru Hargobind (1595-1644)	*- constructed the Akal Takht and the miri (temporal power)/piri (spiritual authority) philosophy. The Harimandir Sahib represents the spiritual authority for Sikhs, and the Akal Takht represents the temporal power.*
Guru Hari Rai (1630-1661)	*- toured various sangats (Sikh parishes), reorganized the masand system*, and *emphasized the authority of the Guru*
Guru Hari Krishen (1656-1664)	*-his appointment ensured the continuity of the Guruship in the face of opposing forces, namely Emperor Aurangzeb who attempted to undermine the authority and charismatic power that the Sikh Gurus had acquired. He was* also *known for the service (sewa) he provided for those who were inflicted with the small pox plague in his time.*
Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) *Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708)* *- see chapter two*	*- composed the Sukhmuni Sahib Path (psalm of peace) and gained considerable influence and undermined Aurangzeb's rule. Refusing to accept Islam, Guru Tegh Bahadur was sentenced to death on November 11, 1675. This event sparked the creation of the Khalsa.*

Table 3.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE RAHIT	CHARACTERISTICS
Sikh Philosophy	*Members of the Khalsa are expected to obey and practice the teachings of the Sikh philosophy as documented in the Guru Granth Sahib.*
Code of Conduct	*Members of the Khalsa are expected to practice all five k's (see glossary).* *The Rahit addresses a wide range of behaviors. For example, behaviors ranging from methods of personal devotion (i.e. prayers, service, and gurdwara attendance) to personal hygiene are discussed. Also certain behaviors are forbidden such as smoking.*
Sanctions	*The Rahit prescribes sanctions which are to be used against those members of the Khalsa who violate the rules of the Rahit. Contemporary sanctions are determined by the each sangat (Sikh parish).*

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APPENDIX A: ETHNIC GROUP IDENTITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF EDMONTON SIKH YOUTH INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Where were you born?

2. If you were not born in Canada, how old were you when you moved to this country?

3. What is your sex? 1. Male _____ 2. Female _____

4. Are you single, married, separated, widowed, or divorced?

5. a. Do you speak, read, write, or understand Punjabi?
   b. What is your proficiency level for each skill?

6. If you have children, are they being taught Punjabi?
   In what way? For example:

   a. Is Punjabi is spoken at home most of the time?
   b. Is Punjabi taught at Gurdwara and spoken at home most of the time?
   c. Is Punjabi taught at home/gurdwara and spoken at home most of the time.
   d. Is Punjabi taught at home/gurdwara but English is spoken at home most of the time?

   Allow for variation. Also, determine whether children are old enough to learn.

7. a. How important would it be/is it for your children (or grandchildren) to learn Punjabi?
   b. Has teaching Punjabi to children/grandchildren become more important in the period since the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple complex?

8. How important is it for you to maintain close ties with other Sikhs in Edmonton? Why?

9. How important is it for you to maintain ties with Sikhs in India? Why? (Consider age and place of birth of respondent)

10. a. Would you say you watch Sikh television programs regularly, occasionally, rarely or never? Why?

b. If never, is it because the informant cannot understand Punjabi fluently? If he/she could understand Punjabi, would he/she be interested in watching these programs?

11. a. Would you say you read Sikh publications regularly, occasionally, rarely or never? Why?

b. If never, is it because the informant cannot read Punjabi fluently? If he/she could read would he/she be interested in reading these publications?

12. a. What would you say is the major Sikh activity you are most actively involved in? [This includes formal and informal (i.e. kirtan at home) activity]. For example:

1. Sports
2. Social activity
3. Business
4. Religious
5. Politics
6. Cultural or educational
7. Others?

Probe into a specific activity. [i.e. If cultural activity, ask what type (i.e. Vaisakhi?)]

b. Has the nature and degree of participation in Sikh related activities changed in the period since the 1984 Sikh crisis in India? If yes, in what way?

13. a. Do you attend Gurdwara? How Often? For example:

1. once a month or less
2. for major occasions only (weddings, Guru' birthdays, Vaisakhi, etc.)
3. weekly or more

b. Have your attendance patterns changed as a result of the Sikh crises in India (directly or indirectly)? In what way and why?

14. a. How regularly do you follow the political, governmental and/or religious affairs of Sikhs in India?

b. If not regularly, do you make a point to follow major issues?

c. Is it important for you to follow political, governmental and religious affairs of Sikhs in India? Why?

d. Did you follow Sikh affairs more actively (than now) during the peak of the Sikh crisis and/or when the Canadian media was involved in reporting Sikh related events? If so, Why?

15. a. Which sources have informed you of the political, governmental and religious affairs of Sikhs in India? For example: [Ask for specific sources (i.e. letters from whom?)]

    1. Personal Correspondence
        a. letters
        b. phone call
        c. fax

    2. Local and/or international Sikh,
        a. publications (books, magazines and academic articles, newspapers)
        b. television programs
        c. radio programs.
    3. Visits to India
    4. Parents, friends and relatives
    5. Gurdwara.
    6. Other sources (specify)

    b. What is the most influential source of information?
    c. Has the influence of these sources changed in the period since the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple complex? (i.e. do letters from relatives inform you more than television?)

16. a. How much violence do you think still exists between Indian Sikhs and the Indian Government today?

17. a. Do you think that conflict still exists between Sikhs and the Indian government?
    b. Do you think the nature of the conflict has changed since the peak of the Sikh crisis? In what way?

18. a. How effective do you think international organizations, such as the World Sikh Organization or the International Sikh Youth Federation, are in resolving the conflict between the Indian government and the Sikhs? In what way? How did you learn of the effectiveness of these programs? If you do not know, why?
    b. What do you think Indian Sikhs' evaluation of these programs are?
    c. Which group(s) of Sikhs do you think these organizations are helping (i.e. Indian, Canadian, U.S., Britain)? In what way?
    d. Has more violence or conflicts experienced by Sikhs worldwide erupted since the development of these organizations?

19. a. How important is it for you to have a Sikh homeland called Khalistan?
    b. Do you think Sikhs feel it is important to have a Sikh homeland called Khalistan?

20. a. How important do you think it is for Sikhs to practice the Five K's?
    b. How important do you think it is for you to practice the Five K's? Do you value the worth of the Five K's? In what way? Has this attitude changed in the period since the 1984 Sikh crisis in India? (Consider age of respondent)

21. Would you consider yourself to be

    a. One who has cut hair and values the worth of Guru Nanak's teachings primarily? (go to question 25)
    b. One who has cut hair and values the worth of the Sikh doctrine created by all ten Gurus? (go to question 25)
    c. One who has uncut hair (Kes-dhari) and values the worth of Guru Nanak's teachings primarily? (go to question 24)
    d. One who has uncut hair (Kes-dhari) and values the worth of the Sikh doctrine created by all ten Gurus? (go to question 24)
    e. an Amrit-dhari Sikh? (go to question 23)

    Allow for variation in response categories.

22. a. Did the attack on the Golden Temple complex influence your decision to take Amrit? In what way? If you took Amrit before 1984, did the 1984 Sikh crisis strengthen your conviction about taking Amrit?
    b. If the attack on the Golden Temple Complex was one of the reasons you took Amrit, what were the other reasons?

23. a. Did the attack on the Golden Temple complex influence your decision of becoming a Kes-dhari Sikh? In what way? If you became a Kes-dhari Sikh before 1984, did the 1984 Sikh crisis strengthen your conviction about being a Kes-Dhari?
    b. If the attack on the Golden Temple complex was one of the reasons you became a Kes-dhari Sikh, what were the other reasons?

24. a. In your opinion, should all those who consider themselves Sikh (regardless of the observance of the Five K's) be considered Sikh?
    b. In your opinion, how must one behave to be considered a Sikh? What must one believe in order to be considered a Sikh? Has this opinion been influenced or changed by the Sikh crises events during and since 1984?

c. If informant thinks only Kes-dhari and Amrit-dhari deserve to be considered a Sikh, ask informant what kind of life he/she thinks Kes-dhari should lead? (i.e. similar to Amrit-dhari?)

25. a. How important is it for you to identify yourself with a caste? If so, why? If not, why not?

b. Do you consciously think of asking another person what caste they are?

c. Under what circumstances would you be concerned with asking a person or group of people what caste they are?

d. Do you think the caste system continues to persist in the Sikh community? Why? Do you think it should?

e. Do you feel the practice of the caste system by the community inhibits you socially? In any other way?

26. a. Do you feel the Sikh way of life has been challenged and/or criticized by Canadian society. (i.e. with respect to Turbans, Kirpan, etc.)? Why or why not?

b. If not mentioned above, ask informant about the role of the Canadian media. For example: What image do you think the Canadian media portray(ed) of Sikhs and Sikh issues (such as Kirpan issue, R.C.M.P issue, Legion issue)?

c. How active have Sikhs been in responding to issues such as the Kirpan issue, R.C.M.P. issue, Legion issue? If active, what effect have Sikhs had on resolving these issues?

d. Do you feel that discrimination by non-Sikh Canadian citizens and the Canadian government against Canadian Sikhs has become more intense since the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple complex? Why or why not?

27. a. What impact did the attack on the Golden Temple complex and the subsequent conflict between Sikhs and the Indian government have on yourself and your family? (consider age and place of birth of respondent)

b. Has the impact of the 1984 Sikh crisis on you and your family become less/more intense since 1984? In what way?

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY[2]

Amrit: This `nectar of immortality' is the sugar water used to baptize Sikhs. Amrit is used in the initiation ceremony of the Khalsa (amrit sanchar).

Amrit-dhari: A Sikh who has taken Amrit, thereby becoming a member of the Khalsa.

Five K's: Khalsa Sikhs are required to wear the following five items which begin with the letter K:

Kacch: a type of undershorts
Kangha: a wooden comb
Kara: steel bangle
Kes: uncut hair
Kirpan: a sword varying in size

Note: The significance and origin of the Five K's will be outlined in the historical review of Sikhs.

Gurdwara: Sikh Temple. A copy of the Guru Granth Sahib is placed in every Gurdwara.

Guru Granth Sahib: The main source of sacred Sikh scriptures; a compilation of the works of all ten gurus. Guru Gobind Singh declared that the succession of Gurus was to cease after his death. The Guru Granth Sahib was to take the place of Guru Gobind Singh, and thereafter, act as Guru for all time.

Khalsa: "the religious order established by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699" (McLeod, 1989:131). It is necessary to understand the context in which the Khalsa was formed. During the time of Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs faced severe opposition and persecution. Because the survival of Sikhism was threatened, Guru Gobind Singh declared that a system of defense was required. The Khalsa was created and required Sikhs to defend their identity when faced with opposition. An initiation ceremony (amrit-sanchar) and a distinctive code of dress (Five K's) and conduct was developed.

Note: A more detailed examination of the origins and spiritual and secular significance of the Khalsa will appear in the historical review of Sikhism. A particular emphasis will be placed on how the introduction of the Khalsa acted to reshape the Sikh identity.

Kes-Dhari: A Sikh with uncut hair.

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[2]The definitions developed for this glossary are based primarily on W. H. McLeod's (1989) *Who is a Sikh?*

Nam-Simran: nam: The divine name; God; the Timeless One: **Simran:** meditation.

Sahaj-Dhari: a Sikh who has cut hair; a non-Khalsa Sikh.

sangat: a congregation of Sikhs

Sikh Panth: The (worldwide) community of Sikhs.